

Exhibit 14

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January 15, 2025

Confirmation Hearing of Homeland Security

Secretary Nominee Gov. Kristi Noem

1 SENATOR PAUL: ... that the department
 2 and its components engage in. In other words, we
 3 do so much stuff and we're so big we can't
 4 describe it for you. But if we can't describe
 5 what we have, we got a problem. In plain
 6 language, the DHS had really no idea. Think
 7 about it. An agency commanding over \$110 billion
 8 annually can't account for its own activities.
 9 This is not just bureaucratic incompetence, it's
 10 emblematic of a deeper issue, an agency unsure of
 11 its own boundaries and commitments. How can an
 12 agency fulfill its mission or earn the American
 13 people's trust if it doesn't even know the extent
 14 of its own operations?

15 But the problems don't stop there.
 16 Instead of focusing on critical threats like
 17 securing the southwest border, DHS has shifted
 18 its gaze inward, targeting law-abiding Americans.
 19 DHS, under the Biden administration, has often
 20 used its vast powers to target Americans
 21 exercising their constitutional rights. It's
 22 become an agency more focused on policing speech,
 23 monitoring social media, and labeling political
 24 dissent as "domestic terrorism" than addressing
 25 genuine security threats. While cartels traffic

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1 liberty hand in hand, not at odds with each
 2 other.
 3 Today we gather to consider the
 4 nomination of Governor Kristi Noem to serve as
 5 the Secretary of Department of Homeland Security.
 6 I hope this hearing will set the tone for this
 7 committee's work in the new Congress to restore
 8 transparency and accountability to an executive
 9 branch that has grown unchecked. Governor Noem,
 10 if confirmed, you will lead an agency that has
 11 lost its way. Your record as governor of South
 12 Dakota and a former member of Congress
 13 demonstrates your willingness to make difficult
 14 decisions in the face of significant political
 15 pressure, and to put the interest of American
 16 people first. You have the opportunity today to
 17 address how your background and vision will
 18 translate to leading one of the most critical and
 19 scrutinized departments in the federal
 20 government.

21 This is the first of many consequential
 22 moments for this committee as we renew our
 23 commitment to the constitutional oversight role
 24 that Congress must assert. I have no doubt that
 25 the nominee we'll consider in the coming weeks

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1 people and fentanyl across an unguarded border,
 2 DHS has spent its time and resources creating
 3 partisan disinformation boards, spying on
 4 Americans through invasive surveillance
 5 technologies. The mission drift is dangerous.
 6 Every dollar spent monitoring law-abiding
 7 citizens is a dollar not spent securing the
 8 homeland. Every moment spent targeting political
 9 opponents is a moment not addressing real threats
 10 like border security, cyber-attacks, or the
 11 rising influence of adversarial nation states.
 12 The priorities of DHS have been deeply distorted,
 13 and the American people are paying the price.

14 And what about DHS's response to COVID-
 15 19, arguably one of the greatest threats to
 16 homeland security? The answer is clear:
 17 nothing. They knew nothing of the origins, they
 18 didn't study the issue, and they had no
 19 information about gain-of-function research.
 20 We've seen firsthand how unchecked government
 21 overreach leads to waste, fraud, and abuse. We
 22 cannot let DHS become yet another agency that
 23 operates behind a veil of secrecy. The American
 24 people deserve transparency, accountability, and
 25 leadership that puts national security and

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1 and months that you will be up for the challenge.
 2 Governor Noem, thank you for your willingness to
 3 serve, and I yield to the Ranking Member for his
 4 opening remarks.

5 SENATOR PETERS: Thank you, Chairman
 6 Paul. Governor Noem, it's great to see you here
 7 today, and I want to first thank you for making
 8 yourself available not only to the entire
 9 committee, but to the discussions that we had in
 10 my office. Going perhaps a little more in-depth
 11 on the issues than is possible in a hearing like
 12 this and having that open and frank conversation
 13 is something that I appreciate. Also appreciate
 14 your willingness to spend time with committee
 15 staff as we conduct our due diligence and review
 16 of your qualifications and the background to
 17 serve as secretary of the Department of Homeland
 18 Security.

19 As our third-largest federal agency,
 20 with more than 240,000 employees and an operating
 21 budget of more than \$100 billion, the Department
 22 of Homeland Security requires strong, stable, and
 23 principled leadership. Our nation faces serious
 24 threats and security challenges, from securing
 25 our borders and combating terrorism to preventing

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1 cyber-attacks and responding to our nation's
 2 increasing number of natural disasters, and DHS
 3 is the first line of defense in all of those
 4 areas. I appreciated the conversations we had at
 5 today's hearing, where we discussed the
 6 importance of ensuring that our nation's borders
 7 are safe and secure. And while we must address
 8 the significant challenges we face on the
 9 southern border, we also need to ensure that
 10 there are sufficient resources to secure our
 11 northern border, something I know you're very
 12 familiar with as the governor of your state,
 13 including building out our Northern Border
 14 Mission Center.

15 This is especially important in my home
 16 state of Michigan, which has two of the nation's
 17 busiest border crossings, and we're going to be
 18 adding another span shortly, the Gordie Howe
 19 International Bridge, which will open later this
 20 year. To facilitate the lawful trade and travel
 21 out those ports of entry that are absolutely
 22 critical to our economy, I've worked on
 23 legislation to hire additional U.S. Customs and
 24 Border Protection officers to meet increased
 25 staffing demands. We must secure our borders,

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1 companies. There's no question that DHS must
 2 continue to lead the way in protecting our
 3 networks from foreign adversaries, cyber
 4 criminals, and so-called "hacktivists" to prevent
 5 cyber-attacks from becoming increasingly
 6 devastating to our security as well as to our
 7 economy.

8 And finally, the Department of Federal
 9 Emergency Management Agency must continue to work
 10 hard to address the increasing number of natural
 11 disasters affecting our communities as a result
 12 of climate change. From violent storms like
 13 hurricanes that brought destruction to states
 14 across the South, to the devastating wildfires in
 15 California, and countless other severe storms and
 16 flooding events all across our country, we need
 17 leadership at the department that will ensure our
 18 nation effectively responds to communities when
 19 disaster strikes them.

20 The safety and security of our nation
 21 and the American people depend on the
 22 department's ability to effectively address these
 23 wide-ranging threats. So, Governor Noem, thank
 24 you again for your willingness to serve in this
 25 incredibly important position, and thank you for

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1 but we also know it is well time passed to
 2 streamline our immigration and our asylum process
 3 as well.

4 In addition to border security, DHS is
 5 responsible for addressing many threats that face
 6 our nation. Just a few weeks ago, unfortunately,
 7 Americans were shocked to see two horrific
 8 incidents in New Orleans and Las Vegas, a deadly
 9 reminder that terrorism and radicalization remain
 10 very real and ongoing threats to our homeland.
 11 In my role on this committee, I've made combating
 12 foreign and domestic terrorism, as well as
 13 extremism, a top priority. In this complex
 14 environment, it is essential that DHS continue to
 15 focus on all terrorism threats, track, and report
 16 data to Congress and to the American people, and
 17 coordinate between all components to ensure the
 18 department is effectively addressing all types of
 19 terrorist threats.

20 We've also seen that persistent cyber-
 21 attacks are still a very serious threat. In
 22 fact, an increasing threat. A recent attack from
 23 Chinese-based hackers infiltrated the Treasury
 24 Department, on top of ongoing Salt Typhoon hack
 25 that comprised numerous U.S. telecommunications

1 being here today. I look forward to having a
 2 comprehensive discussion about how you intend to
 3 lead this critical department through a series of
 4 national security challenges, if indeed you are
 5 confirmed.

6 SENATOR PAUL: This morning, Governor
 7 Noem will be introduced by Majority Leader John
 8 Thune and Senator Kevin Cramer. Senator Thune,
 9 you're recognized.

10 SENATOR THUNE: Thank you, Mr.
 11 Chairman, and Ranking Member Peters, and members
 12 of the committee. I'm very pleased to be able to
 13 be here today to introduce South Dakota's
 14 outstanding governor who has been nominated by
 15 President Trump to serve as the Secretary of the
 16 Department of Homeland Security. I've known
 17 Kristi Noem for a long time. She has a very
 18 compelling personal and family story, which
 19 inspired her entrance into the public arena, and
 20 I'm sure you'll hear a little bit more about that
 21 from her. But I've observed as she has gone
 22 through the state legislature as a leader there,
 23 state House of Representatives, the U.S. House of
 24 Representatives, where she was our only member
 25 from South Dakota representing our state's

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1 interests there for eight years, and now
 2 currently as South Dakota's governor, and I think
 3 she brings to this job a number of things that
 4 are going to be really essential.

5 And one is obviously a skill set when
 6 it comes to managing hard problems. She led our
 7 state through the pandemic, managed what were
 8 extraordinary circumstances all across this
 9 country in a way that made South Dakota, frankly,
 10 a magnet for people from other states who were
 11 trying to flee or get away from some of the
 12 heavy-handed requirements that were imposed in
 13 other states around the country. Our state
 14 stayed open, stayed free, and that was largely
 15 due to her leadership.

16 And I would say too, as we tackle what
 17 is an enormously complicated and hard issue,
 18 which is our southern border, it's going to
 19 require a skill set which I believe she
 20 possesses, it's going to require a tremendous
 21 amount of persistence and determination, which I
 22 think she has, an enormous amount of energy,
 23 which she has in abundance. And frankly, what I
 24 would say is just absolute toughness. It's going
 25 to take some tough and hard leadership to get

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1 of the Department of Homeland Security. Thank
 2 you, Mr. Chairman.

3 SENATOR PAUL: Senator Cramer?

4 SENATOR CRAMER: Thank you, Chairman
 5 Paul, Ranking Member Peters, colleagues. Once
 6 again, I find myself in full agreement with the
 7 majority leader. It's a good place to be in our
 8 business.

9 So, this is a very special opportunity
 10 for me, and first thing I want to do is thank
 11 nearly all of you. I got into almost every one
 12 of your offices with Kristi as her very
 13 amateurish sitting Senator Sherpa. And the
 14 blessing for me was not only to be with my good
 15 friend and former colleague, but to learn a lot
 16 about this committee that I'm not on and to get
 17 an inside view. And Gary, especially learning
 18 how we can work together at the northern border
 19 and how similar, although very different,
 20 Michigan and North Dakota are. So, thank you for
 21 your hospitality, you were all very kind to
 22 Kristi and to me.

23 But Kristi is a former colleague. When
 24 you're the only member of a body of 435 from an
 25 entire state, it's really important to have

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1 things back in order.

2 And I want to refer to something she
 3 said in her state of the state address earlier
 4 this week to South Dakotans, and that is that
 5 "Over the past four years, we've seen a complete
 6 disregard for the security of our borders and the
 7 safety of the American people, to say nothing for
 8 the rule of law. Chaos at our southern border
 9 and the Biden administration has left our country
 10 vulnerable to a whole host of security concerns,
 11 from terrorist entries to cross-border criminal
 12 activity like drug trafficking." I think it's
 13 well documented, and I think it's high time that
 14 it gets fixed, and we have somebody nominated by
 15 the President that I believe has the
 16 capabilities, the qualities, the experience, and
 17 again, frankly, the determination and toughness
 18 to solve what is a very, very tough issue, and
 19 one which is desperately in need of solutions.

20 So, I'm pleased to be able to be here
 21 today to introduce our great governor and to
 22 thank you for your consideration. I look forward
 23 to this committee acting on her nomination, and I
 24 look forward to voting for her on the floor of
 25 the United States Senate to be the next Secretary

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1 friends. So, together, Kristi and I were two,
 2 two out of 435, and if we could get Montana,
 3 Wyoming, and Alaska, there'd be five of us that
 4 could take on the fight. But I know this. I
 5 remember our very first year, my first year, it
 6 was not hers, my first year in the House, the
 7 unthinkable happened, and the House of
 8 Representatives failed to pass a farm bill. And
 9 all I can tell you was the least secure homeland
 10 person in America was the Speaker of the House
 11 and the Majority Leader the next day, when Kristi
 12 and I doubled up, and eventually we got a farm
 13 bill done.

14 I say that because we are living at a
 15 time, and Senator Peters, you used the words
 16 "strong, stable, and principled". I can't think
 17 of three better words to describe Kristi Noem
 18 than those three words. I would add this. I'm
 19 not surprised that President Trump turned to
 20 Governor Noem. Securing the homeland is the
 21 number one priority, our number one priority, our
 22 number one constitutional priority, as a
 23 Congress. And it is for sure the number one
 24 priority of the voters in the last election. And
 25 it is the number one priority for President

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1 Donald Trump. So, naturally he would say, "Hmm,
 2 who is the toughest, smartest, most capable
 3 protector that I know? I think I'd like to find
 4 a ranch woman, mom, grandmother, who knows how to
 5 protect her own." And when you grow up on a
 6 ranch in the prairies or the West, nobody else is
 7 going to look out for your critters. No one else
 8 is protecting your family. You do it.
 9 And she brings this skill set, as
 10 Senator Thune said, as a leader, as a legislator,
 11 as a member of Congress, as a governor, a very
 12 important... By the way, when I get into the room
 13 with other governors, Senator Hassan, I might as
 14 well have just left, because I was not part of a
 15 club where I don't belong. But anyway, it was
 16 very, very rich, because there's an alliance
 17 there that's really, really important. And so,
 18 for me, it's just a really special opportunity to
 19 be able to be here with her and to have had this
 20 time in your offices introducing her to you.
 21 But I want to wrap up with this,
 22 because last night I received a very touching
 23 letter, unsolicited by either Kristi or me, from
 24 the tribal chairwoman from the Standing Rock
 25 Sioux Tribe, which straddles North Dakota and

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1 to support her and turn it over to her.
 2 SENATOR PAUL: Thank you for those
 3 great introductions. The committee has also
 4 received several statements in support of
 5 Governor Noem's nomination, including a letter
 6 from 22 fellow governors, the International
 7 Association of Firefighters, and six other
 8 organizations. Without objection, these letters
 9 of support will be made part of the hearing
 10 record. And I know our Senators are going to
 11 have to go but thank you for coming and doing
 12 those introductions.

13 It's the practice of this committee to
 14 swear in the witnesses. Governor Noem, please
 15 stand and raise your right hand. Do you swear
 16 that the testimony you will give before this
 17 committee will be the truth, the whole truth, and
 18 nothing but the truth, so help you God?

19 GOVERNOR NOEM: I will.

20 SENATOR PAUL: Governor Noem, you are
 21 now recognized for your opening statement.

22 GOVERNOR NOEM: Thank you, and good
 23 morning, Chairman Paul, Ranking Member Peters,
 24 and the distinguished members of this committee.
 25 I'm honored to appear before all of you today as

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1 South Dakota. They don't really care who wins
 2 the South Dakota State/North Dakota State
 3 football game, but they do care about their
 4 reservation. And Chairwoman Alkire sent me this
 5 letter. Standing Rock is the home of Sitting
 6 Bull in case you were wondering about the
 7 credentials of their ability to protect the
 8 homeland.
 9 I'll just read a few words. "On
 10 multiple occasions, Governor Noem has invited the
 11 Standing Rock Sioux Tribe to her table at the
 12 South Dakota State Capitol to enter into
 13 meaningful discussions." That's what I witnessed
 14 when she came to your offices. And Janet writes,
 15 "It is of great excitement and enthusiasm that
 16 our North Dakota Governor Doug Burgum will be at
 17 the helm of the Department of Interior, and my
 18 hopes remain high that you will feel the same
 19 about Governor Kristi Noem at the helm of the
 20 Department of Homeland Security. These two
 21 governors understand the needs in Indian country,
 22 and what words like tribal sovereignty,
 23 jurisdiction, and consultation mean to the
 24 Indigenous people." Speaks volumes to her
 25 leadership and to her character. It's my honor

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1 the nominee for the Secretary of Homeland
 2 Security. I want to thank President-elect Donald
 3 J. Trump for his confidence in my leadership, and
 4 the people of South Dakota for their fantastic
 5 support throughout my time in public service. I
 6 would also like to express my sincere gratitude
 7 to Senator Cramer. He has been an invaluable
 8 resource to me throughout this process, and given
 9 me much wisdom, as well as insight, into the
 10 thoughts and the procedures of the Senate and
 11 this body. And I'd also like to express my
 12 gratitude to Senator Thune, the Majority Leader
 13 of this esteemed body. He's been an advisor to
 14 me for many years, as well as a friend, and I'm
 15 so grateful for the generous support of these two
 16 men and their willingness to be here this morning
 17 to speak on my behalf, and to introduce me to
 18 this committee.

19 Now, I'm a wife and a mother and a
 20 grandmother; a farmer, rancher, businessperson.
 21 I've served in our state legislature, in Congress
 22 for eight years, and also a governor. I've spent
 23 my entire life in rural America. I understand
 24 what it means to work hard every single day, and
 25 to build a better future for your kids and for

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1 all of our communities. I come before you today
 2 with a deep sense of responsibility and a
 3 humility, as the nominee, to lead the Department
 4 of Homeland Security, and also a commitment to
 5 the more than 330 Americans who we will work
 6 together to help serve and to keep safe and
 7 secure in their homes and in their communities.

8 Now, before I proceed, I want to
 9 introduce to you my husband, Bryon, who's here
 10 with me today. He is my constant 24/7 reminder
 11 of our dedication to public service, and that
 12 it's not a solo effort or done alone. He has
 13 been a rock by my side, and I appreciate all of
 14 his love over so many years. I'm grateful that
 15 he's here with me today.

16 Now, securing our homeland is a
 17 serious, sacred trust that must be relentlessly
 18 pursued, and can never be taken for granted.
 19 Being safe within our borders here in America is
 20 critical, and yet Americans feel less safe than
 21 they have felt in decades. For the first time in
 22 30 years, more than 40 percent of Americans are
 23 afraid to walk alone at night within a mile of
 24 their homes. President-elect Trump is going to
 25 change that. I've seen firsthand the challenges

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1 leading the Department of Homeland Security.
 2 As we face the evolving threats of the
 3 21st century, the mission and the success of DHS
 4 is more critical than ever. We must be vigilant
 5 and proactive and innovative to protect the
 6 homeland. The challenges in front of us are
 7 extremely significant, and we must secure our
 8 borders against illegal trafficking and
 9 immigration. We must safeguard our critical
 10 infrastructure to make sure that we're protected
 11 against cyber-attacks, respond to natural
 12 disasters, and also terrorism. I firmly believe
 13 that we can meet those challenges head on with
 14 resolve. Innovation, we can use collaboration
 15 with federal and with state partners. And
 16 Senators, I want your input. Border security
 17 must remain a top priority. As a nation, we have
 18 the right and the responsibility to secure our
 19 borders against those who would do us harm, and
 20 we must create a fair and a lawful immigration
 21 system that is efficient, and is effective, and
 22 that reflects our values.

23 President Trump was elected with a
 24 clear mandate. He needs to achieve this mission,
 25 because two-thirds of Americans support his

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1 and the opportunities facing our great nation.
 2 In the 20 years since the Department of Homeland
 3 Security was formed, the nature of the threats to
 4 our homeland has grown and they've evolved. This
 5 department was created in response to the
 6 failures of the government that led to the
 7 September 11th terrorist attacks, and that
 8 reality is not lost on me, especially in the wake
 9 of the recent terrorist attacks over New Year's.

10 Now, I've led South Dakota for the last
 11 six years, with a focus every day on making our
 12 state safer, stronger, and freer. I've focused
 13 every day on making the best decisions, not just
 14 for right now, but for generations to come. I've
 15 overseen a state budget of over \$7 billion, and a
 16 state employee workforce of more than 13,000,
 17 including more than 7,000 that report directly to
 18 the governor. I've addressed important issues
 19 like cyber security, human trafficking, drug
 20 interdiction, and also natural disasters, the
 21 same challenges that are facing so many of you
 22 and the people that you represent back home.
 23 I've secured our state and supported the rule of
 24 law, and if confirmed as the eighth secretary,
 25 that is the same approach that I will take to

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1 immigration and border policies, including the
 2 majority of Hispanic Americans. I was the first
 3 governor to send National Guard troops to our
 4 southern border when Texas asked for help and
 5 when they were being overwhelmed by an
 6 unprecedented border crisis. If confirmed as
 7 secretary, I'll ensure that our exceptional,
 8 extraordinary Border Patrol agents have all the
 9 tools and resources and support that they need to
 10 carry out their mission effectively. The same is
 11 true of my commitment to the outstanding men and
 12 women of the U.S. Immigration and Customs
 13 Enforcement. They are responsible for
 14 apprehending, detaining, and deporting illegal
 15 immigrants, and getting criminal aliens off of
 16 our streets and out of the country will help
 17 American communities be safer again. The bravery
 18 and the dedication of the Border Patrol and ICE
 19 are unmatched, and I will restore dignity to
 20 their work. The rising threat of cyberattacks
 21 also demands our utmost attention, and our
 22 critical infrastructure, from energy grids to
 23 financial institutions, is under constant attack
 24 by foreign adversaries and criminal actors. As
 25 secretary, I will prioritize a comprehensive,

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<p>1 whole-of-government approach to cybersecurity. 2 In fact, in the coming days, we have to plan 3 bigger and think faster and smarter. I fully 4 acknowledge that people in Washington D.C. do not 5 have all of the answers, and therefore, I will 6 leverage private-public partnerships, I'll 7 advance cutting-edge, state-of-the-art 8 technologies to protect our nation's digital 9 landscape, and I will have a proven track record 10 of doing this in South Dakota to back me up. 11 I've helped make Dakota State University a global 12 leader in cybersecurity education, because we 13 recognize the need to address this emerging 14 threat. And I will take a proactive approach if 15 given the opportunity to serve as secretary. 16 Now, President-elect Trump has been a tremendous 17 friend to law enforcement over the years, and I 18 will do the same in my role as secretary. As 19 governor, I've worked closely with law 20 enforcement to make South Dakota safer. I've 21 overseen hundreds of state troopers in the South 22 Dakota Highway Patrol, and on several occasions, 23 I've convened groups of law enforcement from 24 across our state to address policies that will 25 make our people safer. In fact, while some in</p>	<p>1 homeland security isn't just about prevention, 2 but it's also about resilience. When disasters 3 strike, as we know they will, the Department of 4 Homeland Security must be ready to respond 5 swiftly, efficiently, and effectively to protect 6 the lives and the property of Americans. As 7 governor, I've worked with FEMA in response to a 8 dozen natural disasters in South Dakota. These 9 have included historic floods, tornadoes, 10 blizzards, wildfires, a derecho, and even a 11 global pandemic. As secretary, I will enhance 12 our emergency preparedness and strengthen FEMA's 13 capabilities, and we will ensure that no 14 community is left behind, and that life-saving 15 services, like electricity and water, are quickly 16 restored.</p> <p>17 As secretary, I will oversee the Secret 18 Service, an agency that is in serious need of 19 reforms. We all saw the threats to President- 20 elect Trump last year and the consequences of 21 failure. Now, that should never happen again, 22 and I've worked closely with my own gubernatorial 23 protective detail, and I'm familiar with what 24 works and what doesn't work, and I'll bring that 25 experience towards strengthening the Secret</p>
<p>Page 22</p> <p>1 this country were attacking law enforcement and 2 defunding them, we took the opposite approach in 3 South Dakota. We recruited law enforcement 4 officers to move to South Dakota, a state that 5 respects their service and their sacrifice, and 6 we revamped our law enforcement training to 7 provide the first ever state-led tribal-focused 8 law enforcement training academy. I'm very proud 9 of the work that we've done in cooperation with 10 our tribes to help make their communities more 11 safe.</p> <p>12 And we must remain vigilant against 13 terrorism and against others who wish to do us 14 harm to our country and to our great people. 15 I'll ensure that our intelligence and our law 16 enforcement agencies are working together hand- 17 in-hand, that they're fully equipped to detect, 18 prevent, and respond to threats from radical 19 ideologies and foreign adversaries. This 20 requires resources, coordination, and 21 collaboration across all levels of government. 22 And once again, I will seek your wisdom, and I 23 will seek your input into the months ahead. For 24 the sake of the people that we both represent, we 25 have to get this right. Now, I recognize that</p>	<p>Page 24</p> <p>1 Service once again. 2 I'm committed to working with this 3 committee, with Congress, and with the dedicated 4 men and women of the Department of Homeland 5 Security to fulfill our mission. And together, 6 we can ensure that the United States remains a 7 beacon of freedom, safety, and security for 8 generations to come. So, thank you for the 9 opportunity and the honor to appear before you 10 today. Thank you for the meetings and the time 11 that you took in your office to discuss the 12 department and what we can do in the future to 13 make the American homeland much more secure. I 14 look forward to your questions, and I hope to 15 earn your trust, and hopefully also your vote, as 16 we embark on this critical work together. With 17 that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.</p> <p>18 SENATOR PAUL: Thank you, Governor 19 Noem. We will now proceed to questions. Each 20 member will have seven minutes. We will have a 21 vote that will start at 10:00 a.m., but we're 22 going to continue the hearing and keep people in 23 line; as you come and go to vote, we'll keep the 24 hearing moving. I want to be clear from the 25 outset that we will not tolerate any disruptions.</p>

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<p>1 The Capitol Police have been asked to escort 2 anyone immediately from the room if they disrupt 3 the hearing.</p> <p>4 This is a standard question, Governor 5 Noem, that we ask of all nominees. Governor 6 Noem, do you agree without reservation to comply 7 with any request or summons to appear and testify 8 before any duly constituted Committee of Congress 9 if you are confirmed?</p> <p>10 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yes, Mr. Chairman,</p> <p>11 SENATOR PAUL: I'm going to reserve the 12 rest of my time for my questions and go to 13 Senator Peters.</p> <p>14 SENATOR PETERS: Thank you, Mr. 15 Chairman. Governor Noem, the DHS Secretary, has 16 many competing priorities, as you well know, and 17 you outlined, certainly, in your opening 18 comments, from our borders to wildfires to cyber- 19 attacks. But as you and I discussed at length, 20 and I appreciate you bringing it up in your 21 opening comments as well, we do have a northern 22 border in addition to a southern border, that's 23 absolutely essential that the DHS has the 24 resources necessary at the northern border to 25 carry out its mission, both between ports of</p>	<p>1 addressing all threats that may come in from any 2 direction. And also, with the bridge as well and 3 staffing up on that, that as well, and I've 4 assured Senator Slotkin as well that our focus is 5 there to make sure that it is staffed 6 appropriately.</p> <p>7 SENATOR PETERS: Very good. And as we 8 discussed, the department is diligently working 9 to stand up the Northern Border Mission Center at 10 Selfridge Air National Guard Base in Michigan, 11 following the authorization and funding that I 12 was able to secure in the last Congress. This 13 center is critical to supporting the Department's 14 northern border security missions and addressing 15 evolving threats. So, quick question: if 16 confirmed, do you commit to working with me to 17 fully build out the Northern Border Mission 18 Center?</p> <p>19 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yes, Senator, we will 20 look forward, and I look forward, to working with 21 you to ensure that that is a priority, and that 22 it's adequately resourced, and working with 23 Congress and Senators to make sure that we have 24 what we need to make sure that that mission for 25 that base is fully fulfilled.</p>
<p>Page 26</p> <p>1 entry and all along the border. In fact, we've 2 seen an increase in unauthorized crossings in 3 recent years at the northern border.</p> <p>4 So, my question for you is, if 5 confirmed, do you commit to ensuring, along with 6 the southern border, that the northern border is 7 sufficiently staffed to maintain its security and 8 robust trade between the U.S. and its neighbors, 9 including at the Gordie Howe International Bridge 10 in my home state of Michigan, have the resources 11 they need to facilitate trade, while keeping 12 Americans safe?</p> <p>13 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yes, Senator Peters, 14 you and I talked about this in your office, and 15 also with Senator Slotkin as well, how important 16 it is to continue to remain focused on our 17 northern border, and all borders and ports of 18 entry that the United States has. I think 19 there's been some universal concern from some of 20 the committee members that as we focus on the 21 southern border and what we're seeing, as far as 22 the invasion there and the amount of people 23 crossing, that the northern border would lose 24 focus. But that will not happen, and we will 25 ensure that our borders are secure, and we're</p>	<p>Page 28</p> <p>1 SENATOR PETERS: Great. Thank you. On 2 New Year's, we witnessed two incidents that 3 reminded us that terrorism and extremism remain 4 serious threats to all Americans. Both DHS and 5 the FBI have consistently said that the most 6 persistent threat to the homeland is from U.S.- 7 based individuals or small groups radicalized by 8 a variety of ideologies, from white supremacy to 9 ISIS to al-Qaeda. We must certainly continue to 10 focus on people who are radicalized here in the 11 United States with the intent of terrorizing our 12 communities. So, my question for you, ma'am, is 13 how do you plan to address this threat of U.S.- 14 based terrorists?</p> <p>15 GOVERNOR NOEM: Senator, this is a 16 grave concern for our country, as we all agree 17 that the number one threat to our homeland 18 security is the southern border. In fact, since 19 Joe Biden has been president, we've seen 382 20 individuals that have come over that border that 21 are on the terrorist watch list. I, behind me, 22 have the governor of Louisiana with me, and he 23 and his state and people in this country went 24 through a horrific event on New Year's Day, and 25 one that we never want to see repeated again.</p>

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<p>1 But this governor behind me is concerned also 2 about an upcoming event, which is the Super Bowl, 3 coming shortly, which we need to do all that we 4 can to work together, that he has the reassurance 5 that the federal government, that the Department 6 of Homeland Security, is prepared to help him 7 protect that event, and to keep people safe while 8 they are there.</p> <p>9 Those 382 terrorists are known 10 terrorists that have come over our border. We 11 don't know necessarily where they are because of 12 what has been happening under Joe Biden's 13 policies. Now, President Trump obviously won the 14 last election with a clear mandate, and that 15 mandate is for the American people to secure that 16 border. But also, we need to focus on domestic 17 terrorism and homegrown terrorism, which you just 18 referenced in your question. Homegrown</p> <p>19 GOVERNOR NOEM: Homegrown terrorism is 20 on the rise. We see more and more incidents of 21 people that are U.S. citizens that have become 22 radicalized. And knowing when people are leaving 23 the country and coming back and changes to their 24 behaviors and what their actions are is 25 critically important.</p>	Page 30	<p>1 infiltrated the Department of Treasury and stole 2 potentially thousands of unclassified documents. 3 So, given these concerning trends by the PRC to 4 hold our federal networks' hostage, do you 5 believe that federal agencies should be required 6 to implement cybersecurity upgrades and maintain 7 the highest cybersecurity standards to protect 8 sensitive or classified data and U.S. citizen 9 information as well?</p> <p>10 GOVERNOR NOEM: Well, Senator, the 11 mission of CISA, which is the Cybersecurity and 12 Infrastructure Agency, the mission of it is to 13 hunt and harden. It's to find those bad actors 14 and help work with local and state 15 infrastructure, critical infrastructure entities 16 so that they can help them be prepared for such 17 cyber-attacks and that they can make sure that 18 they're hardening their systems to protect them 19 in the future, recognizing the vulnerabilities 20 that they have.</p> <p>21 CISA has gotten far off mission. 22 They're using their resources in ways that was 23 never intended. The misinformation and 24 disinformation that they have stuck their toe 25 into and meddled with should be refocused back</p>
<p>1 So, the resources that the Department 2 of Homeland Security has needs to be utilized as 3 far as identifying those threats and being 4 proactive to prevent them but also protecting 5 civil rights and liberties in that process and 6 making sure that the department is on mission to 7 do what it was called to do, why it was created, 8 and what authorities that Congress and the Senate 9 has given them.</p> <p>10 My hope is that Governor Landry and his 11 staff and his people and the people that attend 12 the Super Bowl know that the Department of 13 Homeland Security is their partner, is on watch 14 to protect them and to keep that event safe. I 15 hope all Americans know that leadership has 16 consequences. I hope that we can get through and 17 get your support for this nomination and get 18 confirmed quickly so that we can address the 19 threats that we currently face and make sure we 20 don't have any repeats of the day that we saw 21 just starting this year on New Year's Day.</p> <p>22 SENATOR PETERS: In the last two years, 23 we have seen increasingly aggressive and 24 expansive cyber-attacks against our federal 25 agencies. Just last month, Chinese hackers</p>	Page 31	<p>1 onto what their job is, and that is to support 2 critical infrastructure and to help our local and 3 small businesses and critical infrastructure at 4 the state level to have the resources and be 5 prepared for those cyber-attacks that they will 6 face.</p> <p>7 Salt Typhoon was a campaign of 8 espionage by the PRC in China against our 9 telecoms where large amount of data was stolen 10 and taken, and people's private information was 11 taken as well. And we've also seen China and the 12 PRC go after our critical infrastructure with the 13 Volt Typhoon hack, and that was extremely 14 dangerous because there was no reason for them to 15 do that, just to steal people's data and 16 information.</p> <p>17 The reason for them to go after that 18 was to control our critical infrastructure for 19 the ability to see if they could shut down a 20 water plant, a utility company. And that was to 21 cripple our country. So, these threats are real. 22 CISA needs to be much more effective, smaller, 23 more nimble to really fulfill their mission, 24 which is to hunt and to help harden our nation's 25 critical infrastructure.</p>

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<p>1 SENATOR PETERS: Thank you. 2 GOVERNOR NOEM: Thank you. 3 SENATOR JOHNSON: Senator Scott. 4 SENATOR SCOTT: Governor, 5 congratulations on your nomination. 6 GOVERNOR NOEM: Thank you. 7 SENATOR SCOTT: I think you're going to 8 do a great job. 9 GOVERNOR NOEM: Thank you. 10 SENATOR SCOTT: I think it's great that 11 you're a governor and you bring that expertise to 12 the table. So, I just went through the campaign 13 to get reelected, and it was after the Butler 14 shooting. I had asked people at all my events. 15 I say, "Raise your hand if you think the acting 16 director of the Secret Service is going to tell 17 us what happened." Not one person. I said, 18 "What about Mayorkas? He's running HHS, what do 19 you think, or Homeland Security. What do you 20 think?" I said, "How about Christopher Wray, 21 head of the FBI?" Not one person. Can you just 22 talk about the importance of transparency and 23 accountability in government and how you're going 24 to bring that to the table? 25 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yeah. Senator, Scott,</p>	<p>Page 34</p> <p>1 people there and being adequately staffed and 2 resourced. 3 But frankly, the leadership hasn't been 4 honest about talking about it. We saw this with 5 the drones over New Jersey as well, the federal 6 government not answering the questions from the 7 public. And when they finally got a straight 8 answer out of President Trump, they felt 9 reassured that somebody recognized that this was 10 something they were questioning and that they 11 deserved answers. 12 My goal and my mission is to build 13 trust. We will undertake a large job and a large 14 duty that we have to fulfill, that the American 15 people expect us to do by securing our border to 16 make sure that our nation is a nation with 17 borders or we're no nation at all, and that we 18 are making sure that those criminal actors that 19 are perpetuating violence in our communities and 20 in our cities and towns and states are removed 21 from this country, that there's consequences for 22 breaking the law in our country again. 23 There has to be consequences because 24 when Americans break the law, there's 25 consequences. And why would we ever allow</p>
<p>1 thank you for that question because that's what I 2 have found across the country as well, and I know 3 it's certainly true in my home state of South 4 Dakota, is that people don't trust the federal 5 government. They don't trust our leadership and 6 this current administration that's in the White 7 House right now to tell them the truth, to tell 8 them the truth about what the threats really are 9 about our agencies and departments when there are 10 failures, addressing them and fixing it. 11 The Secret Service is one of those 12 perfect examples. They need leadership that 13 understands why that Secret Service was created 14 and what it needs to do. There's two elements 15 really that the Secret Service is tasked with, 16 and that is protective detail and then also 17 investigations. Yet we see investigators within 18 the Secret Service out there investigating 19 antiquities and other things that are off mission 20 when they should be focused on making sure we're 21 addressing national security events with the 22 protocols that are necessary and protecting the 23 individuals that they're charged with and getting 24 that skill set and training that are necessary. 25 That's been compromised by not having enough</p>	<p>Page 35</p> <p>1 someone to come in from another country and not 2 have consequences or allow them to continue to go 3 forward and to commit rape and murders and other 4 break other laws that endanger our society? So, 5 we've had over 13,000 murders that are loose in 6 this country that have come over that border. 7 We've had almost 16,000 rapists and sexual 8 assault perpetrators that are loose in this 9 country right now. 425,000 plus people have 10 criminal convictions that are here illegally in 11 this country that our current administration's 12 doing nothing to round them up and get them out 13 of our country. 14 We will be doing that immediately, and 15 that will be the priority, and that is one of the 16 reasons that today the American people have lost 17 their trust. President Trump will build it back 18 and know that their federal government is 19 accountable to them and is working to put America 20 first again. 21 SENATOR SCOTT: So, Joe Biden 22 completely opened on our southern border and 23 dismantled our entire immigration system. As a 24 former governor, I know that when the federal 25 government policies are broken and failing</p>

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1 Americans, you see the impacts in your state just
 2 like I did when I was a governor, and you take
 3 the steps necessary to protect the families in
 4 your state. I know you've done that.

5 One thing you did is you talked about
 6 before you sent troops, our National Guard, to
 7 the southern border. Can you talk more about how
 8 Biden's open border policy has affected your
 9 state and communities and the role your state
 10 resources placed in helping secure the border?

11 GOVERNOR NOEM: We certainly have seen
 12 the effects in South Dakota that many of your
 13 states did. And I would say every state has seen
 14 the effects of an open border in the policies
 15 that have been under the Biden administration.
 16 We saw increased crime, but we also saw increased
 17 drug activity. We saw cartel in their affiliates
 18 moving into our state to proliferate trafficking,
 19 and we saw people being victimized and a lack of
 20 accountability with the federal government.

21 So, when Texas was addressing the
 22 situation and asked other governors for help, we
 23 sent help. I know many of the other governors at
 24 the time were sending law enforcement, but I made
 25 the decision that at that time that it was more

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1 security operations. They also did building of
 2 the wall and partnered with Texas recognizing the
 3 failures of the federal government.

4 The failures of the federal government
 5 are significant, and we've seen our families and
 6 communities devastated by those effects, by the
 7 drug epidemic, by the trafficking that's going
 8 on. They increased crime. And we recognize that
 9 just because the federal government wasn't doing
 10 their job, we could not fail our state. And I
 11 needed to protect the people of South Dakota.
 12 And the people of South Dakota were
 13 overwhelmingly supportive of these deployments
 14 and very proud of our National Guard.

15 SENATOR SCOTT: When I was governor of
 16 Florida, there was a terrorist hack in Paris by
 17 Syrian refugees. So, President Obama was
 18 president, and I said, "I'd like to know if
 19 you're going to send refugees to my state that
 20 you give us some background on them." I assume
 21 you vetted them and tell us what's going on. You
 22 have to tell me, but you ought to tell our state
 23 law enforcement and our local law enforcement
 24 that they said, "Go jump in the lake."
 25 (Indiscernible) meaner than that, but they said,

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1 appropriate to send the National Guard that our
 2 National Guard could be activated under Title 32
 3 and sent to assist another state from the
 4 invasion that was happening and because the
 5 National Guard is trained for just such a
 6 mission.

7 Because of this invasion, that it is a
 8 war zone down there with what they are going to
 9 see, the threats that they would see and that
 10 they are trained specifically to interact with
 11 other agencies, the National Guard is used to
 12 falling in with other agencies and cooperating
 13 with them and could do that seamlessly, and their
 14 families and their communities are normalized to
 15 them being deployed.

16 So, we have in South Dakota deployed
 17 our National Guard to the southern border eight
 18 different times. Two of them were federal
 19 deployments that the Biden administration sent
 20 them down there. One was to send our Lakota
 21 helicopters, which were used for surveillance in
 22 the drug interdiction that was going on down
 23 there. But six other times, I sent them under
 24 state activation to partner with Texas and other
 25 states in securing our southern border. They did

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1 "You have no rights as a governor," which had
 2 made no sense. We had over 70,000 people come
 3 here after Afghanistan on planes into this
 4 country completely unvetted. They've never given
 5 our governors any information. So, would you
 6 change that?

7 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yes. The communication
 8 between states and the federal government has
 9 been absolutely broken, and that's what I love
 10 about this committee, is you do have governors
 11 sitting on this committee that have been in that
 12 role as a commander in chief and have the
 13 responsibility for being the CEOs of their state.
 14 It's a different perspective than
 15 serving. I served in Congress too, and both are
 16 extremely important, and they're just different
 17 in that responsibility that weighs on your
 18 shoulder. I often told folks that that is the
 19 thing that most times if something was going to
 20 keep me up at night, it was the responsibility
 21 that I had being commander in chief, recognizing
 22 the decisions that I made. And I'm sure you had
 23 this feeling as well, Senator Scott, as governor,
 24 that impacted those families, those soldiers.
 25 And it impacted their communities when we pulled

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<p>1 them out and the importance of that.</p> <p>2 And when they were bringing refugees</p> <p>3 into the country, I as well communicated that to</p> <p>4 the federal government. They were bringing</p> <p>5 refugees, and I asked how they were vetted, how</p> <p>6 we were working with their home countries to find</p> <p>7 out who they really were, what their intentions</p> <p>8 were and why they were coming to the United</p> <p>9 States and received no information from this</p> <p>10 administration that that vetting process was</p> <p>11 being done, that we knew where they're going.</p> <p>12 In fact, they kept us in the dark and</p> <p>13 didn't communicate to us even what states and</p> <p>14 where those refugees were being placed. So, that</p> <p>15 is something that we need to change when we have</p> <p>16 programs that fall under the purview of the</p> <p>17 Department of Homeland Security. There needs to</p> <p>18 be communication, especially with the governor,</p> <p>19 so that we can coordinate to ensure that it's the</p> <p>20 right thing for that state.</p> <p>21 SENATOR SCOTT: Thank you.</p> <p>22 SENATOR JOHNSON: Senator Hassan.</p> <p>23 SENATOR HASSAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.</p> <p>24 And welcome, Governor Noem. I really appreciate</p> <p>25 you being here. Welcome to your family as well.</p>	<p>1 at the northern border recently, law enforcement</p> <p>2 told me about the need for more personnel and</p> <p>3 resources. We still don't have cell phone</p> <p>4 coverage in a lot of the stretch of our northern</p> <p>5 border. I've worked with Senator Kramer on</p> <p>6 bipartisan legislation to strengthen our northern</p> <p>7 border strategy because it's clear more support</p> <p>8 is needed. So, Governor, if you're confirmed,</p> <p>9 would you deploy additional full-time personnel</p> <p>10 and upgrade equipment along the northern border?</p> <p>11 GOVERNOR NOEM: Senator, I enjoyed our</p> <p>12 meeting that we had and you identifying the</p> <p>13 northern border issues that are going on, the</p> <p>14 lack of security and the lack of technologies</p> <p>15 that you really need to cover, some of the</p> <p>16 landscapes that are there very different than the</p> <p>17 southern border, some just as equally challenging</p> <p>18 but all need to be addressed.</p> <p>19 So, I definitely will be working with</p> <p>20 you to ensure that our northern border is</p> <p>21 adequately resourced as well, and we do have to</p> <p>22 have the resources in order to be successful.</p> <p>23 SENATOR HASSAN: Right.</p> <p>24 GOVERNOR NOEM: That's something I want</p> <p>25 to work with Congress, with the Senate and the</p>
<p>Page 42</p> <p>1 GOVERNOR NOEM: Thank you.</p> <p>2 SENATOR HASSAN: And families do share</p> <p>3 in this kind of public service, and we appreciate</p> <p>4 them very much. As we discussed at our meeting</p> <p>5 last month, as a former governor, I appreciate</p> <p>6 the important responsibilities that governors</p> <p>7 have to ensure the safety and security of their</p> <p>8 communities, including by managing public safety</p> <p>9 and emergency agencies.</p> <p>10 And I will say that, in many ways, I</p> <p>11 agree with some of the things that Senator Scott</p> <p>12 just said about improving communication between</p> <p>13 the Department of Homeland Security and governors</p> <p>14 around who is being sent to states. It's a</p> <p>15 critical issue and something that I was</p> <p>16 frustrated by when I was governor. So, I look</p> <p>17 forward to hearing more today about your</p> <p>18 priorities if confirmed about how your experience</p> <p>19 as governor would help you run the Department of</p> <p>20 Homeland Security.</p> <p>21 Let me just start by following up with</p> <p>22 a question that Senator Peters had also touched</p> <p>23 on. We have recently, in New Hampshire, seen a</p> <p>24 dramatic increase in unauthorized border</p> <p>25 crossings at the northern border. And when I was</p>	<p>Page 44</p> <p>1 House on to ensure that the resources are there</p> <p>2 to meet the challenges that we have. We have not</p> <p>3 fully utilized the technologies that are</p> <p>4 available that are necessary to really secure</p> <p>5 this country and to compete with those bad actors</p> <p>6 which wish to infiltrate our country and having</p> <p>7 the ability to utilize them will make us much</p> <p>8 more safe. So, I'll work with you most</p> <p>9 definitely ensuring the northern border is</p> <p>10 protected.</p> <p>11 SENATOR HASSAN: Well, I appreciate</p> <p>12 that, and I just note too that at the same time,</p> <p>13 there's real concern in New Hampshire and all</p> <p>14 along the northern border that we strengthen the</p> <p>15 border and have the resources we need. We also</p> <p>16 have a really strong economic relationship with</p> <p>17 our friends to the north and a lot of family</p> <p>18 relationships.</p> <p>19 So, I think it's important that we're</p> <p>20 smart in the deployment of technology. We don't</p> <p>21 want to impede that flow of economy and people</p> <p>22 that's lawful, but we do want to make sure that</p> <p>23 we have the resources we need. I want to turn to</p> <p>24 the southern border now.</p> <p>25</p>

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<p>1 At the southern border, we need 2 significant technological investments to support 3 law enforcement personnel in their efforts to 4 catch fentanyl smugglers to stop human 5 traffickers and seize the cash and illegal guns 6 that criminals traffic southward to the cartels. 7 And we talked about this a little bit.</p> <p>8 There's bipartisan support for these 9 investments, and I've worked with colleagues 10 including Senators Lankford and Cornyn on 11 legislation around these issues. Governor Noem, 12 could you identify specific technological 13 investments that you would make at the southern 14 border and are you willing to work with me on 15 increasing southbound inspections if you're 16 confirmed?</p> <p>17 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yes. Certainly, 18 Senator. You've heard President Trump talk about 19 the need to build a wall. And the wall and 20 infrastructure is critically important. But 21 also, at our 382 legal ports of entry, we need to 22 have technology so that flow can happen north and 23 south, and it can happen in a legal manner to 24 ensure that our commerce can continue to operate, 25 and that we can continue to make sure that we're</p>	<p>1 attack on power school, a cloud-based record 2 management system that contains personal 3 information about tens of millions of 4 kindergartners through high school seniors, 5 including many students and teachers in New 6 Hampshire.</p> <p>7 This cyber-attack on power school comes 8 as schools and local governments across the 9 country have seen a surge in cyber-attacks on 10 their systems. And when a small of maybe a 11 thousand students or so has to pay \$2 million in 12 ransom, I want you to think about what that does 13 to one of our small communities. Right? So, 14 Governor Noem, if you're confirmed, how will you 15 empower the cybersecurity and infrastructure 16 security agency to improve the cybersecurity of 17 state and local governments in the United States?</p> <p>18 GOVERNOR NOEM: Well, thank you, 19 Senator. If I am confirmed and have the 20 opportunity to serve as secretary of this 21 department, I'll be following the constitution 22 and the rule of law and then getting these 23 departments back on mission to why they were 24 created and why they are existing.</p> <p>25 What CISA should be doing is helping</p>
<p>Page 46</p> <p>1 also secure.</p> <p>2 I think de minimis shipments are a 3 concern and the need to look at those and how 4 traffickers and fentanyl distributors are using 5 that. I think we also need to use scanners 6 surveillance operations. There's new 7 technologies out there to cooperate with 8 satellites in some area where the topography does 9 not necessarily facilitate having actual 10 infrastructure and then also the ability to make 11 sure that we're utilizing that technology that 12 allows us to know what is going south that might 13 be fueling some of the violence that ends up 14 coming back north and ensuring that we're 15 stopping that before it has the chance to supply 16 those cartel and bad actors that would come in.</p> <p>17 SENATOR HASSAN: Yeah. I really 18 appreciate that because the southbound flow, 19 particularly of cash and weapons, fuels the 20 cartels and strengthens them.</p> <p>21 GOVERNOR NOEM: Absolutely.</p> <p>22 SENATOR HASSAN: And it's something 23 that we really have to focus on. I also want to 24 follow up on the issue of cyber security.</p> <p>25 Recently, criminals launched a successful cyber-</p>	<p>Page 48</p> <p>1 those small entities, those schools, those local 2 city governments, the state governments, and the 3 small businesses that are critical infrastructure 4 that don't have the resources to stay on top of 5 the critical protections that they need to enact.</p> <p>6 SENATOR HASSAN: Well, let me follow up 7 just quickly on that one point. It's something 8 we discussed when we had our meeting. I worked 9 with Senator Cornyn on a bipartisan bill. It 10 became law that created a cybersecurity grant 11 program for state and local governments. This is 12 an addition to each state getting a cyber 13 coordinator to help on the ground.</p> <p>14 We discussed this program, and I know 15 you as governor had some reservations about the 16 structure of the program, but if confirmed, will 17 you commit to working with Congress to adjust it? 18 I'd love your input about what gave you pause as 19 governor. I think there were only two governors 20 who didn't participate in the program. And I 21 hope that as we work on the concerns you have, 22 you'd work with me to adjust and reauthorize the 23 program.</p> <p>24 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yes. All grants within 25 the department will be evaluated when I come in</p>

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1 and be looked at to see what we can do to make
 2 sure that they're actually fulfilling the mission
 3 to which they were established. What I would say
 4 about the cybersecurity grants in South Dakota,
 5 when I came in as governor, one of my main
 6 priorities was to bring the next industry into
 7 the state. And I determined that that would be
 8 technology and cybersecurity.

9 In fact, we have Dakota State
 10 University in our state, which is a cybersecurity
 11 national leader in training those cyber warriors
 12 that we need to protect us and keep us safe.
 13 I've since then partnered to grow and double the
 14 size of that school. We train a lot of NSA
 15 employees in South Dakota. And so, understanding
 16 cybersecurity and my experience and that I think
 17 is critically important to the department and
 18 bringing it to the table to do this.

19 You talked about why we didn't take
 20 that cybersecurity grant in South Dakota, and
 21 it's because the requirements of that grant
 22 would've caused me to grow my state government.
 23 The administration costs of it would've been much
 24 more than what it been able to facilitate at the
 25 local level. And our state was already

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1 Mayorkas has been an absolute disgrace to that
 2 department and frankly to this country. And I'm
 3 delighted to see you willing to step up and
 4 serve. Let me just ask you something. I
 5 repeatedly asked your predecessor when he sat
 6 where you're sitting, whether the southern border
 7 was secure. And he repeatedly told me under
 8 oath, "It is secure, Senator." And he repeatedly
 9 said under oath, "Our policies are working,
 10 Senator," meaning the Biden administration
 11 policies that, of course, gave us this
 12 devastating open border. So, let me just ask
 13 you, is the southern border secure as we find it
 14 today?

15 GOVERNOR NOEM: Senator, no. The
 16 southern border is not secure today. But in just
 17 three days, we will have a new president in this
 18 country, President Donald J. Trump. And he will
 19 secure our border.

20 SENATOR HAWLEY: That is refreshing
 21 candor. I'm glad to hear it. Let me ask you
 22 about a young man from my state. This is Travis
 23 Wolfe who's 12 years old when he was killed just
 24 over a year ago by an illegal migrant who mowed
 25 him down, and I choose my words carefully, mowed

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1 proactively helping these individuals that needed
 2 the resources to secure their systems.

3 SENATOR HASSAN: Well, I appreciate
 4 that. I'm way over time. There were very few
 5 requirements purposely in that grant program
 6 other than to make sure the money was being spent
 7 the way we authorized. But let's continue to
 8 talk about that.

9 GOVERNOR NOEM: Thank you.

10 SENATOR HASSAN: Thank you.

11 SENATOR JOHNSON: Senator Hawley.

12 SENATOR HAWLEY: Thank you, Mr.

13 Chairman. Governor Noem, welcome.

14 Congratulations on your nomination. I'm
 15 delighted to see you here. I do notice the
 16 Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee is over
 17 your shoulder there. I have to question your
 18 judgment about who your friends are based on that
 19 through the great Chairman from the state of
 20 Missouri. It's fantastic to have you here.

21 The Department of Homeland Security is
 22 not particularly old, but you already have the,
 23 what I hope, will soon be the distinction of
 24 succeeding the worst secretary in the history of
 25 the Department of Homeland Security. Alejandro

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1 him down in a motor vehicle, hit him head on
 2 doing 75 and a 40, killed him. Others were
 3 severely injured. Just yesterday, a witness
 4 sitting where you are sitting today told this
 5 committee that migrant crime is and I quote, "Not
 6 an actual concern." Not an actual concern.

7 In a hearing before this committee
 8 advising us to drop the Laken Riley act and not
 9 focus on migrant crime. In my state with the
 10 death of people like Travis Wolfe and Officer
 11 David Lee who was assaulted and killed in St.
 12 Louis and officers in Kansas City who have been
 13 assaulted by illegal migrants and others who have
 14 been carjacked and stabbed, would you agree with
 15 me that migrant crime sure as heck is an actual
 16 concern and that you intend to do something about
 17 it?

18 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yes, Senator.
 19 Absolutely. And I'm so sorry about Travis. My
 20 prayers go out to his family. I can't even
 21 imagine what that is like, and thank you for
 22 telling his story because there's so many
 23 families in this country that have that same
 24 story, and they don't understand why the federal
 25 government is allowing people to come into this

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14 (Pages 50 - 53)

<p>1 country illegally and then perpetuate crimes 2 against their people, and then give them 3 resources and shelter and food and debit cards to 4 go take care of their families when they go to 5 work every single day to make sure that they're 6 providing for their families and are held 7 accountable to when they break our laws.</p> <p>8 SENATOR HAWLEY: Let me ask you this, 9 will you work with President Trump to reinstate 10 the Remain in Mexico program that the President 11 had in place in his first term, which does so 12 much to ensure that those who would seek to abuse 13 our asylum system are not allowed into the 14 country and those who have legitimate asylum 15 claims, their claims are processed in due order 16 and in due course, but they wait in Mexico until 17 those claims are fully processed. Will you work 18 to reinstate that program?</p> <p>19 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yes, Senator. The 20 president and I have talked extensively about 21 this, and we'll 100 percent partner with him to 22 reinstate the Remain in Mexico policy and make 23 sure that it's in place.</p> <p>24 SENATOR HAWLEY: Fantastic. I think 25 Travis might be alive today if that policy had</p>	<p>1 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yes, Senator. If 2 confirmed, and I have the opportunity to be 3 secretary on day one, CBP One will be shut down. 4 There's data and information in there that we 5 will preserve so that we can ensure we know who's 6 coming into this country and who's already here 7 that we need to go find. But also, we make sure 8 that there's another program, CHNV, which I'm 9 sure you're very familiar with, where our federal 10 government actually paid to fly people into this 11 country directly from other countries without any 12 vetting or knowing who they are. So, there's 13 several of these programs that need to be 14 eliminated, and we need to ensure that we're 15 following legal immigration laws.</p> <p>16 SENATOR HAWLEY: I'm glad you just 17 mentioned CHNV. This is a mass parole program. 18 Of course, as you know, our law allows parole in 19 only very limited circumstances. There are two 20 circumstances, and it requires case by case 21 evaluation. The present administration soon to 22 be gone has granted mass parole in direct 23 defiance of the law, not case by case evaluation. 24 The CHNV program is one of those instances. Will 25 you put a stop to this abuse of our parole law</p>
<p>Page 54</p> <p>1 been in place. Let me ask you about CBP One, the 2 phone app, that I've called concierge service for 3 illegal Immigrants. I'm sure you're familiar 4 with it. This was the Biden administration's 5 effort to allow asylum seekers to apply ahead of 6 time using their phones but not actually to 7 provide any evidence that they needed asylum. 8 There is a newspaper report, a press report that 9 said the only problem with the app is it never 10 asks users are you seeking asylum? They don't 11 ask for any asylum evidence. They simply release 12 these so-called asylum seekers who use the app 13 into the country on parole.</p> <p>14 Sometimes, they're never given a 15 hearing. The Inspector General actually did a 16 report, a full investigation report on CBP One 17 and found that, frequently, users of this app 18 were claiming the same addresses in the United 19 States as their intended destination, even though 20 they didn't know each other, they weren't family 21 connections. In other words, it has been 22 completely abused. And the idea that the federal 23 government would pay for this kind of concierge 24 service for Illegals, I think, is outrageous. 25 Will you end the use of the CBP One app?</p>	<p>Page 56</p> <p>1 and our asylum system?</p> <p>2 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yes, we will go back to 3 case by case evaluation of these parole cases and 4 ensure that we have more resources, if you will 5 partner with us to make sure that our legal 6 immigration system is fully utilized, that we 7 have more judges, more immigration courts so that 8 we can process people legally and make sure that 9 they are going through that process rather than 10 like Joe Biden has done, use this an excuse to 11 allow people to come into our country with no 12 consequences.</p> <p>13 SENATOR HAWLEY: Let me ask you about 14 another low light, not a highlight, but a low 15 light of this last administration and DHS. Your 16 predecessor, the current secretary of DHS, 17 established a disinformation board using taxpayer 18 resources to police speech on the internet and 19 elsewhere to tag American citizens' viewpoints as 20 either legitimate or not legitimate and use the 21 power of the state to censor them, including 22 having them removed and perhaps penalized.</p> <p>23 This has got to be the darkest chapter, 24 I think, in DHS's short history. He eventually 25 withdrew the board under intense criticism but</p>

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1 has never fully repudiated it and never promised
 2 not to do it again. Will you pledge to us here
 3 today that, under your leadership, there will
 4 never be a disinformation board or anything like
 5 it at DHS, and you will be a champion for the
 6 free speech and first amendment rights of all
 7 Americans?

8 GOVERNOR NOEM: Senator, there will not
 9 be a board such as that under my leadership at
 10 the Department of Homeland Security.

11 SENATOR HAWLEY: Fantastic. Let me ask
 12 you my remaining seconds, just one more thing
 13 about the Secret Service. You've mentioned this,
 14 and I'm so glad that you did this committee. And
 15 it has been bipartisan. This committee has done
 16 bipartisan work on the attempted assassinations
 17 or the assassination attempts, I should perhaps
 18 say, of the former president, the future
 19 president, soon to be the president, President
 20 Trump. We were stymied at every turn, and I
 21 should use the present tense. We are currently
 22 being stymied at every turn by the current Secret
 23 Service leadership and, frankly, by the
 24 leadership of DHS who have refused to turn over
 25 documents who refused to make people available

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1 it was a bipartisan report, an investigation that
 2 this committee conducted. And I appreciate you
 3 focusing on that, and I'll work with you to get
 4 the information so that you have the truth of
 5 really what happened there in the failures so
 6 they can be fixed.

7 SENATOR HAWLEY: Thank you. That's a
 8 great place to end in a high note as I see my
 9 friend, Senator Blumenthal, who did fantastic
 10 work on this effort, and it will be an incredible
 11 new day and incredibly refreshing day to have a
 12 DHA secretary who will tell us the truth, who
 13 will be honest with us about the facts, honest
 14 with the American people and who will enforce our
 15 law. And I know you'll do that. Governor Noem,
 16 I look forward to supporting your nomination.
 17 Congratulations.

18 GOVERNOR NOEM: Thank you.

19 SENATOR JOHNSON: Senator Blumenthal.
 20 SENATOR BLUMENTHAL: Thanks, Senator
 21 Johnson. Welcome, Governor Noem. And thank you
 22 for being here. Thank you for visiting with me
 23 and thank you to your family for their service as
 24 well. Let me begin on a high note thanking
 25 Senator Hawley for his leadership on the effort

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1 for interviews.

2 We finally had to pass my own law in
 3 this committee, which we unanimously adopted a
 4 law statute, mind you, which would require DHS
 5 and Secret Service to turn over relevant
 6 information to us about the assassination
 7 attempts. It's unbelievable. When you come to
 8 office to this office, I hope very soon will you
 9 pledge to us that you will open the books on all
 10 of the facts associated and around these
 11 assassination attempts that you will make
 12 available to us and to the public, most
 13 importantly, all the facts so that we can ensure
 14 that this never happens again and that the needed
 15 reforms in the Secret Service are put into
 16 effect.

17 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yeah. Senator, if I am
 18 the Secretary of Homeland Security, I will
 19 certainly work with you to build transparency and
 20 make sure the facts are shared with you and your
 21 committee. I know that you've been very
 22 frustrated by the lack of transparency from the
 23 department. And I want to thank those of you
 24 that have worked on that report that was put
 25 together on these assassination attempts. I know

1 that I led with him to essentially get some basic
 2 facts out of the Secret Service when we were
 3 investigating Senator Johnson and I as leaders of
 4 the permanent subcommittee on investigation,
 5 helping you lead it with the Chairman and ranking
 6 member here.

7 And I'm hoping that you've read our
 8 report and that you will agree to begin
 9 implementing its recommendations, which call for
 10 major reforms, in my view, a house cleaning top
 11 to bottom in the Secret Service and greater
 12 transparency with this committee and with the
 13 American public.

14 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yes, sir. I will
 15 certainly work with you to do that and to work to
 16 make sure that we have that transparency, and the
 17 committee has the information that it needs to do
 18 due diligence of its oversight.

19 SENATOR BLUMENTHAL: Our investigation
 20 is continuing, Senator Johnson, and I have
 21 discussed it. And we will be making more
 22 requests to pursue the fact-finding that is so
 23 important. I want to ask you about disaster
 24 relief. California is on fire. The fire's
 25 raging. There are going to leave destruction and

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<p>1 devastation that is heartbreaking.</p> <p>2 I am really disappointed with some of</p> <p>3 the statements that President-elect Trump has</p> <p>4 made, for example, saying that quote, "We won't</p> <p>5 give him," referring to Governor Newsom, "money</p> <p>6 to put out all his fires. And if we don't give</p> <p>7 him money to put out fires, he's got.</p> <p>8 SENATOR BLUMENTHAL: ... a problem.</p> <p>9 The specter is there of potential discrimination</p> <p>10 based on politics, withholding money from</p> <p>11 California or other states. It's not an</p> <p>12 unfounded fear. In the last administration,</p> <p>13 there were public reports about President Trump</p> <p>14 withholding money from the State of Washington</p> <p>15 because of his disagreements with Governor</p> <p>16 Inslee. Connecticut, like the rest of the</p> <p>17 nation, suffers from these natural disasters.</p> <p>18 Most recently in August, we were hit by major</p> <p>19 flooding, and these natural disasters are going</p> <p>20 to become more frequent, as will be the need for</p> <p>21 the federal government to meet the requests for</p> <p>22 declarations of natural disaster. I assume you</p> <p>23 will agree with me that withholding disaster</p> <p>24 relief by President Trump or any other chief</p> <p>25 executive of the United States is a violation of</p>	Page 62	<p>1 that's a yes.</p> <p>2 GOVERNOR NOEM: I don't speak to</p> <p>3 hypotheticals, which is what you're asking me to</p> <p>4 do. But what I will tell you is that as</p> <p>5 secretary, I will do the same. I will deliver</p> <p>6 the programs as the laws dictate.</p> <p>7 SENATOR BLUMENTHAL: Well, it's more</p> <p>8 than a hypothetical, with all due respect, and I</p> <p>9 apologize for interrupting you, but my time is</p> <p>10 limited, as you know, as a veteran of these</p> <p>11 hearings. It's more than a hypothetical. It's</p> <p>12 based on experience with President Trump</p> <p>13 withholding money from Washington State and</p> <p>14 elsewhere. I need to know from you, will you</p> <p>15 stand up to the President and say, "No, the</p> <p>16 Constitution and the Impoundment Act requires us,</p> <p>17 for example, to allocate the 100 billion dollars</p> <p>18 that we have just appropriated in the last</p> <p>19 session to states like Connecticut \$3 million,</p> <p>20 Texas, \$10 million, almost every one of the</p> <p>21 states represented here." Will you say no to the</p> <p>22 President if he withholds that money?</p> <p>23 GOVERNOR NOEM: Sir, I don't know about</p> <p>24 the scenarios that you're referencing with</p> <p>25 President Trump, but what I will tell you is that</p>	Page 64
<p>1 his duty and of law.</p> <p>2 GOVERNOR NOEM: Well, Senator</p> <p>3 leadership has consequences and looking at the</p> <p>4 tragedy that's happening in California is --</p> <p>5 SENATOR BLUMENTHAL: I want to ask you</p> <p>6 yes or no, with all due respect, it's an easy --</p> <p>7 GOVERNOR NOEM: What's happening in</p> <p>8 California is the ramification of many decisions</p> <p>9 over many years. But under my leadership at the</p> <p>10 Department of Homeland Security, there will be no</p> <p>11 political bias to how disaster relief is</p> <p>12 delivered to the American people.</p> <p>13 SENATOR BLUMENTHAL: So, if President</p> <p>14 Trump were to say to you, "We're going to</p> <p>15 withhold money from Connecticut or Michigan or</p> <p>16 any of the states, Iowa, because we don't like</p> <p>17 the governor or we don't like the politics of the</p> <p>18 state," you would stand up to him and say, "Mr.</p> <p>19 president, we need to allocate that money."</p> <p>20 GOVERNOR NOEM: Senator, in three days,</p> <p>21 President Trump will take an oath to uphold the</p> <p>22 Constitution and the rule of law in this country,</p> <p>23 and he will do that, and I'll be glad to have him</p> <p>24 back.</p> <p>25 SENATOR BLUMENTHAL: And I assume</p>	Page 63	<p>1 if given the chance to be Secretary of Homeland</p> <p>2 Security, that I will deliver the programs</p> <p>3 according to the law and that it will be done</p> <p>4 with no political bias, and if the programs</p> <p>5 change or if you decide to change the rule of</p> <p>6 law, then I will follow that while adhering to</p> <p>7 the Constitution.</p> <p>8 SENATOR BLUMENTHAL: So, you pledge to</p> <p>9 allocate and distribute that 100 billion dollars?</p> <p>10 GOVERNOR NOEM: According to how the</p> <p>11 program is written with no political bias.</p> <p>12 SENATOR BLUMENTHAL: Thank you.</p> <p>13 GOVERNOR NOEM: Every American deserves</p> <p>14 to be there and have disaster relief the same as</p> <p>15 their neighbors.</p> <p>16 SENATOR BLUMENTHAL: Basically,</p> <p>17 following the law.</p> <p>18 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yes.</p> <p>19 SENATOR BLUMENTHAL: Let me ask you,</p> <p>20 Senator Peters asked you about homegrown</p> <p>21 terrorists. The New Orleans tragedy was the</p> <p>22 result of a homegrown terrorist born in this</p> <p>23 country radicalized by ISIS and it reflects the</p> <p>24 reason why the intelligence community, the FBI,</p> <p>25 almost all of our law enforcement has said</p>	Page 65

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1 repeatedly, domestic violent extremism is the
 2 most lethal and persistent threat to our
 3 security. That terrorist was radicalized by
 4 ISIS. The investigation is underway, we don't
 5 know all the facts, but we do know that he was a
 6 military veteran, and ISIS was responsible for
 7 radicalizing him. Shouldn't we focus on ISIS as
 8 a threat to this country's security?

9 GOVERNOR NOEM: Senator, certainly we
 10 should be focused on all threats to this nation's
 11 security. That's the mission of the Department
 12 of Homeland Security and homegrown terrorism is
 13 growing. We have more and more incidences. The
 14 tragedy we saw and the terrorist attack in New
 15 Orleans was --

16 SENATOR BLUMENTHAL: What will you do
 17 to combat it? What will you do to stop ISIS and
 18 other extremist organization from radicalizing
 19 people in this country?

20 GOVERNOR NOEM: Well, certainly
 21 Senator, I'll continue to work with the
 22 administration and our partners and the
 23 Department of Defense, the intelligence agencies
 24 also within Secretary of State and the other
 25 branches and cabinet officials to make sure we're

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1 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yeah, I look forward to
 2 working with you.
 3 SENATOR PAUL: Senator Ernst.
 4 SENATOR ERNST: Thank you, Senator
 5 Johnson. Governor Noem, thank you so much for
 6 being here today and I want to thank you for your
 7 continuing service, the service that you had as a
 8 member of Congress, the service that you have
 9 displayed as a governor of the great State of
 10 South Dakota, our neighbor to the northwest, and
 11 for being willing to step up and take on this
 12 immense responsibility. So, thank you so very
 13 much.

14 We had such a good discussion when you
 15 came to my office in the last several weeks, and
 16 we talked about the importance of securing our
 17 border and fixing our broken immigration system.
 18 And I'd like to start today by sharing a story
 19 about one of my constituents from Council Bluffs,
 20 Iowa. And what we have seen through this broken
 21 border is tragedy that strikes so many families
 22 across the United States. So, very similar to
 23 the story that was shared by my colleague from
 24 Missouri with his constituent Mr. Wolf. I have a
 25 young woman by the name of Sarah Root who

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1 bringing all resources to bear to identify and to
 2 stop these types of terrorist activities. What I
 3 would say is the cybersecurity and intelligence
 4 elements that we have within the Department of
 5 Homeland Security have been incredibly siloed.
 6 They have not communicated with other
 7 intelligence agencies like they should and
 8 partnered. INA has some interaction but not
 9 enough and we also need to have CISA have
 10 interaction with the FBI, CIA to make sure
 11 they're working together to stop these types of
 12 threats and identify when they're growing among
 13 our citizens and how they become radicalized.

14 SENATOR BLUMENTHAL: My time has
 15 expired. This area of questioning I think is
 16 supremely important. I know there's a lot of
 17 focus on the border. We all want more border
 18 security. We want to stop migrant crime, but
 19 let's not take our eye off the ball. The
 20 governor of Louisiana for the Super Bowl ought to
 21 be really riveted on the potential for homegrown
 22 terrorism as a threat, and I hope that you will
 23 help him and other governors to do their duty to
 24 protect the people of the United States from that
 25 homegrown terrorist threat. Thank you.

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1 encountered tragedy on January 31st, 9 years ago.
 2 So, Sarah Root was struck and killed by an
 3 illegal immigrant who was drunk driving. He was
 4 driving at three times the legal limit of
 5 alcohol, and Sarah's killer was bonded out,
 6 bonded out before the Roots laid her to rest. He
 7 fled the country and has not been seen or heard
 8 from since. The Root family has not seen
 9 justice. So, Governor, how do you plan to
 10 prioritize the detention and deportation of
 11 illegal immigrants like Sarah's killer?

12 GOVERNOR NOEM: Well, yes, Senator,
 13 thank you for telling Sarah's story. I remember
 14 when this happened because it was so close to
 15 home and so devastating for her and her family
 16 and the entire State of Iowa and our country.
 17 President Trump is focused on making sure that
 18 these types of situations don't happen again,
 19 that we don't continue to lose our children and
 20 our family members to illegal immigrants that
 21 come in and perpetuate crime with no
 22 accountability and then are released with no
 23 consequences. So, the number one priority of the
 24 president is to secure the border and to deport
 25 these criminal actors immediately and as soon as

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1 possible. They will be the number one priority
 2 to make our communities safer and so that we
 3 don't have this kind of situation going forward.
 4 In fact, people, I think when they
 5 first heard my name being mentioned and nominated
 6 for the Department of Homeland Security, maybe
 7 thought it was a little bit of a surprise, like,
 8 "Oh, I didn't think about Kristi doing that job."
 9 But I tell people the reason that I asked for it
 10 is because I knew it was the President's number
 11 one priority. I knew that it needed to have
 12 someone in the position that would do what the
 13 President promised the American people, would be
 14 strong enough to do it and follow through to make
 15 sure that we're protecting our communities and
 16 America. But that also came at it from a
 17 perspective of how these families feel, that was
 18 a wife and a mom and a grandmother and would be
 19 able to stand up and communicate to the American
 20 people what we were doing and why we were,
 21 because it's what they asked us to do.
 22 I have three grandchildren and one more
 23 on the way, and when I look at Little Miss Addie
 24 every day, I just think, "What kind of a country
 25 is she going to grow up in? What kind of a

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1 making sure that any communications are secured,
 2 any work is secured. And to that, I know the
 3 Biden Administration has put a huge emphasis on
 4 the cyber bureaucracy, but they haven't really
 5 done anything about it, and they haven't given
 6 any authority to those that are enforcing the
 7 standards. So, we need to enforce the standards
 8 that are set forth to make sure the cyber
 9 security is truly there, but what can DHS do one,
 10 with telework how do we get the employees back,
 11 and then two, how do we make sure that our
 12 systems are secure from these cyber-attacks?

13 GOVERNOR NOEM: Well, Senator, thank
 14 you for focusing on remote work and the need to
 15 get people back in their offices and accountable
 16 to the work that they do. In fact, I've heard
 17 since being nominated for this position that many
 18 of the agencies within the department are not
 19 showing up. They're not doing their jobs. But
 20 even FEMA, who is responsible for disaster
 21 response, that they have the alternative, some of
 22 these employees do not even respond to a
 23 disaster, which might explain the horrific
 24 results that we saw in North Carolina when they
 25 had such a terrible disaster that impacted

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1 country will we leave her and her brother and a
 2 sister?" And I don't want them to think that
 3 their grandma sat on the sidelines and didn't do
 4 all that she could. So, I will enforce the
 5 Constitution and the law, and I will make sure
 6 that when people enact horrific things like this
 7 that happened to Sarah and her family, that there
 8 will be consequences for it.

9 SENATOR ERNST: Yeah, absolutely. And
 10 as a fellow grandma, I know that you are
 11 perfectly positioned to enforce this.

12 I do want to move on to another topic
 13 that we visited about in my office. So, I'm the
 14 founder and the chair of the DOGE Senate Caucus,
 15 and so we do need greater government efficiency,
 16 and I do believe in order to do that, we need
 17 less of our employees teleworking and more of
 18 those government workers back in the office
 19 working for our constituents. And to that end,
 20 it ties together then too. We just found out
 21 that the Treasury Department had a cyber-attack
 22 on December 8th from China, and no surprise here,
 23 they access servers through work from home
 24 software. So, it all ties together.

25 We need more people back in the offices

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1 families and communities, and FEMA failed them so
 2 miserably. If It's not even responsibility of
 3 them to show up when terrible things happen, what
 4 other day-to-day activities are not getting done
 5 because they're working from home or not doing
 6 their job at all?

7 You talked about cyber security and the
 8 need to ensure that our systems are safe and
 9 secure. One of the things that disturbs me the
 10 most is that we don't necessarily even know how
 11 some of these espionage attacks that have
 12 infiltrated our systems have happened. We don't
 13 know how to stop them yet. We don't have the
 14 knowledge and that our departments and
 15 intelligence agencies and cybersecurity agencies
 16 have become siloed and aren't working together to
 17 stay in front of these bad actors. But many
 18 times, our most vulnerable area happens at the
 19 state and local level. Some of these smaller
 20 entities that feeds information into our systems
 21 is where they choose to infiltrate and get our
 22 data and to really hold for ransom many of these
 23 companies and then impact our federal systems as
 24 well.

25 So, one of the first meetings I had

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1 when I was elected governor with the former
 2 governor during the transition was, he said, "The
 3 number one priority you're going to have as
 4 governor is to secure our systems."

5 SENATOR ERNST: Yes.

6 GOVERNOR NOEM: He said, "Our systems
 7 are so antiquated, and we've had over 16,000
 8 hacking attempts in just the last month. You
 9 need to secure our systems to get it done." So,
 10 that was a priority for me and to do that, and we
 11 fully funded it and got it done in South Dakota
 12 and it's being implemented today. I look forward
 13 to doing that at the federal level to make sure
 14 that people's data and information is safe, but
 15 also our country is safe from these bad actors
 16 that have a plan to take us out.

17 SENATOR ERNST: Well, thank you. My
 18 time has expired, but I do want to end on a note
 19 that another thing that I do truly appreciate
 20 about you and your nomination is that as a
 21 governor, you have worked with those local
 22 constituencies as well and those local
 23 governments, and I know that this will be an
 24 incredible strength that will ensure continued
 25 success for you within the department. So, thank

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1 that he's in charge of our nation's borders. So,
 2 I guess, again, I'd just like to go back to you.
 3 How are you going to work with Mr. Homan? What
 4 is the division there? I'm trying to get a
 5 better sense of who's in charge.

6 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yeah. Tom Homan is an
 7 incredible human being who has over 30 years of
 8 experience at the border and the insight and
 9 wisdom and he --

10 SENATOR KIM: Incredible experience, I
 11 get that. I'm just trying to think through
 12 decision-making process when it comes to your
 13 work. For instance, will he be giving orders
 14 directly to CBP, ICE, USCIS?

15 GOVERNOR NOEM: Tom Homan has a direct
 16 line to the President. He is an advisor to the
 17 President, the border Czar. I, obviously, will
 18 be if nominated and confirmed and put into the
 19 position of being the Department of Homeland
 20 Security Secretary and responsible for the
 21 authorities that we have and the actions that we
 22 take.

23 SENATOR KIM: I say this because I
 24 actually want to make sure that we're empowering
 25 the next Secretary of Homeland Security.

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1 you, Governor, very much. Thank you, Mr. Chair.
 2 SENATOR PAUL: Senator Kim.
 3 SENATOR KIM: Thank you, Chairman.
 4 Governor, it's good to see you.

5 GOVERNOR NOEM: Good to see you again
 6 too.

7 SENATOR KIM: Thanks for coming before
 8 our committee. I wanted to just ask you not just
 9 about your work, but how it's going to fit into
 10 the broader incoming Trump Administration and
 11 particular, I guess, I'm uncertain about roles
 12 and responsibilities regarding your position and
 13 Tom Homan's. I guess, I just want to ask you
 14 just point-blank who's going to be in charge of
 15 the border?

16 GOVERNOR NOEM: Well, the president
 17 will be in charge of the border. It's a national
 18 security issue, and the president is in charge of
 19 this country and has made a promise to the
 20 American people, and we will fulfill his agenda.

21 SENATOR KIM: Well, that was a good
 22 answer, it's the answer I would've given as well,
 23 but I guess I got confused. When Trump made the
 24 announcement about Tom Homan, he said, "I'm
 25 pleased to announce that Tom Homan," and said

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1 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yes.

2 SENATOR KIM: In the legislation that
 3 was codified by Congress and moved forward that
 4 started this after September 11th, said "All
 5 functions of all offices, employees and
 6 organizational units of the department are vested
 7 in the secretary." So, I guess the reason why I
 8 mentioned this is I've just seen some quotes from
 9 Mr. Homan where he said, "I'll be making
 10 decisions on border security and deportation."
 11 He was asked in another interview about the
 12 stronger role that he'll play, and he said,
 13 "Absolutely, I'll be making decisions on how we
 14 do the border."

15 So, I just raise that as a concern of
 16 mine because not only is that about the function
 17 of our executive branch, but also the
 18 capabilities of this committee to be able to
 19 properly do our constitutional duties for
 20 oversight. The ability for us to be able to have
 21 that conversation. We can talk to you, engage
 22 with you, that is the direct way, but if he is
 23 going to be making decisions, then he should come
 24 before this committee as well. And I know that
 25 that's something where, as far as I know, his

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<p>1 role will be directly at the White House, is not 2 something that will be under the purview directly 3 of this committee. So, I just wanted to raise 4 those concerns.</p> <p>5 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yeah, yeah. Tom and I 6 work very well together and talk and communicate 7 all the time, and we'll be working together on a 8 daily basis when we're in our positions under the 9 new administration. And I would say there's no 10 authorities being planned to be taken away from 11 the department or myself if I'm in the role, and 12 we'll continue to oversee CPP --</p> <p>13 SENATOR KIM: But it sends some mixed 14 signals. You can understand how people in my 15 home state, maybe around the country, when they 16 hear Mr. Homan saying, "I'm making the 17 decisions." When they hear President-elect Trump 18 say he's in charge of our border. So, I urge 19 that we're going to try to do our best to try to 20 make sure we're empowering the department, 21 empowering the next secretary because that's 22 where our laws are invested in our decision- 23 making.</p> <p>24 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yeah. Well, thank you 25 Senator, and we'll make sure you have all the</p>	<p>1 get into specifics about what organizations that 2 are out there. So, I just wanted to get a sense 3 of your knowledge of the organizations.</p> <p>4 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yes, sir. You have all 5 the traditional terrorist organizations that have 6 always threatened the United States, but I would 7 also say --</p> <p>8 SENATOR KIM: Such as?</p> <p>9 GOVERNOR NOEM: I would say Hamas, 10 ISIS, continuing down that path of those 11 terrorist organizations. But we'll continue to 12 also focus though not just on those, but also the 13 cartels, their partnership with the Chinese and 14 what they are doing. Listen, I've told people 15 for years, for over 30 years, I've worked on 16 national policy, on food policy, on agriculture 17 policy, and I've seen the Chinese agenda to 18 infiltrate our country, control our food supply 19 chain, but also their manipulation of their 20 currency and stealing our IP. And now I believe 21 that this fentanyl crisis that they have flooded 22 our country with is geared and the purpose of it 23 is to kill our next generation of Americans. It 24 is to control us.</p> <p>25 SENATOR KIM: No, I don't discount the</p>
<p>1 information that you need. And Tom working 2 directly with the president and I working 3 directly with the president, hope to help you get 4 all that you need to reassure that the 5 authorities will stay the same as they currently 6 are, but we will continue to work to secure that 7 border and make sure that we're working together 8 in that way.</p> <p>9 SENATOR KIM: I want to just switch 10 gears about you raised the concerns about 11 terrorism, especially foreign terrorist groups. 12 I guess I just want to ask you, what are the 13 major foreign terrorist groups that are... Well, 14 first of all, what are the major foreign 15 terrorist groups that are out there that we're 16 tracking, which are the ones that are concerns to 17 us in terms of potentially trying to inspire or 18 coordinate an attack upon us? And if you can, 19 just give me a sense of what their current 20 capabilities are to try to enact that.</p> <p>21 GOVERNOR NOEM: Well, I think we face a 22 lot of threats, Senator, and since I'm not in the 23 role today, I shouldn't get into specifics with 24 you, but I think over years the --</p> <p>25 SENATOR KIM: Well, you can at least</p>	<p>1 importance of those --</p> <p>2 GOVERNOR NOEM: So, when you focus on 3 one or two groups, I think it takes your eye off 4 the ball as to where all the threats could come 5 from. We just spent a significant amount of time 6 talking about homegrown terrorism as well and 7 about --</p> <p>8 SENATOR KIM: Correct. And I'm glad 9 we're having that conversation. But the reason 10 why I mentioned it, I was not trying to quiz you 11 or anything of that nature. It's just that when 12 the Department of Homeland Security, when their 13 threat assessment for 2025 lists three 14 organizations, lists Al Qaeda, lists ISIS, in 15 particular ISIS Khorasan, and the IRGC, and the 16 threat from Iran, I just want to make sure that I 17 get it. You're talking about the importance of 18 the border. We all understand that we want to 19 work with the incoming administration to try to 20 have an orderly process with that. But I just 21 want to make sure in particular with DHS, the 22 primary mission, if we look at the founding 23 legislation, the primary mission, the very first 24 mission is prevent terrorist attacks within the 25 United States and do everything we can to</p>

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1 minimize that type of threat.
 2 So, yes, I do think it's important for
 3 us to focus in on one, two, or three or just
 4 wherever these terrorist groups are at. Yes,
 5 yes, I know that part of that effort to try to
 6 minimize terrorist attacks is through the work
 7 that we try to do to secure our borders, all of
 8 them: air, sea, and land. But the primary
 9 mission still is about preventing terrorism, not
 10 just the border security. That's a tool to be
 11 able to accomplish that. So, I just raised that
 12 with you. I want to make sure that the next
 13 Homeland Security Secretary has a very detailed
 14 knowledge and understanding about the terrorist
 15 groups, their capabilities, and is tracking that
 16 on a absolute daily basis, and that they
 17 understand that is their top mission. And with
 18 that, I'll yield back to the Chairman.
 19 SENATOR PAUL: Senator Johnson.
 20 SENATOR JOHNSON: Governor Noem,
 21 welcome and thank you --
 22 GOVERNOR NOEM: Thank you.
 23 SENATOR JOHNSON: ... for your
 24 willingness to serve. You'll be taking over a
 25 massive federal government agency, 240,000

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1 been a big topic of conversation in most of the
 2 meetings that I've had with the members of this
 3 committee was how do we fix this agency which the
 4 reputation is that it's broken and dysfunctional.
 5 I think that was the question I get asked the
 6 most is why would you want to head up such a
 7 dysfunctional department? And I would say that
 8 because the mission of the department is to
 9 secure the homeland and our people, it's our
 10 biggest vulnerability right now, and we have a
 11 president that's not enforcing the law, and I
 12 don't believe the law should be unequally
 13 applied. Everyone should be subject to our laws,
 14 and a nation without laws and without borders is
 15 not a nation at all. So, I will work by ensuring
 16 one of the things that Senator Ernst talked
 17 about, people have to show up for work.
 18 I think there's going to be a majority
 19 of people who don't have their primary mission to
 20 secure the homeland, that if they don't want to
 21 show up for work, then maybe they're just not
 22 truly passionate about protecting America. I
 23 think they need to do that, and they need to
 24 recognize what their job is. The morale in DHS
 25 is very low. I'm going to let people do their

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1 employees. It's probably too massive. I think
 2 had I been there back then, I don't think I
 3 would've assembled these 22 different agencies in
 4 this massive department, but that's what we've
 5 got. It's a department that the previous
 6 administration, I think, has completely misused.
 7 Instead of using customs and border protection to
 8 do that, to protect our border and secure it,
 9 they've utilized those resources to incentivize a
 10 massive influx of illegal immigration. Instead
 11 of using the Cybersecurity Infrastructure
 12 Security Agency to do that, they instead engage
 13 in mission creep and utilized it to censor
 14 Americans with the misinformation board. I am
 15 concerned about disaster relief, just federal
 16 disaster relief in general, creating greater and
 17 greater and increasing levels of moral hazard
 18 resulting in higher costs of these disasters.
 19 So, let's cover each one of those kind of in
 20 order. How do you gain control over a massive
 21 agency whose resources and personnel have been
 22 misused? I mean, how do you root out those
 23 individuals who instead of securing our border
 24 opened it up and facilitated this?
 25 GOVERNOR NOEM: Well, Senator, this has

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1 jobs. I'm going to remind them what their jobs
 2 are. Some of these border patrol agents haven't
 3 been able to do their jobs for a very long time.
 4 They've been processing paperwork and
 5 facilitating an invasion when they should be back
 6 securing our border, which is why they were
 7 recruited and wanted to serve there to begin
 8 with.
 9 We're going to build partnerships with
 10 local law enforcement, with ICE and task forces.
 11 So, we're communicating again with local sheriffs
 12 and mayors and law enforcement to partner
 13 together. When you talk about the fact that this
 14 is such a broken agency that needs so much
 15 improvement, a lot of it goes back to why we're
 16 recreated and are we fulfilling that mission and
 17 making sure that these individuals are getting
 18 back on task.

19 SENATOR JOHNSON: So, under my
 20 Chairmanship and under the Trump Administration,
 21 we did rename a part of DHS, so the Cybersecurity
 22 Information Security Agency. I in no way, shape
 23 or form ever contemplated that the sub-agency
 24 within DHS that was really focused on securing us
 25 against the cyber threats and other threats to

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1 our infrastructure would ever be used to violate
 2 the Constitution the way it was used to violate
 3 the Constitution under the Biden Administration.
 4 This administration's been completely opaque. We
 5 do not have the information to know and the
 6 communication in terms of what all happened here.
 7 So, my question is relates to how they misused
 8 CISA. Will you commit to providing the
 9 transparency, providing the information,
 10 investigate it yourself, but provide this
 11 committee, my subcommittee, the information to
 12 expose the truth of the American public, but even
 13 more importantly, propose a piece of legislation
 14 based on our investigation, based on those
 15 results to fix it so that no administration can
 16 ever misuse the language of the law to commit
 17 that kind of unconstitutional act and violate
 18 people's First Amendment rights?

19 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yeah, Senator, I look
 20 forward to working with you on that. And I think
 21 what we saw during the COVID pandemic, the
 22 actions of CISA, their misinformation and
 23 disinformation campaign, the materials they were
 24 putting out was shocking. Shocking at what they
 25 were doing to decide what was truth, what wasn't,

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1 their lives, the hundreds of billions of dollars'
 2 worth of property damage. It's not just
 3 California though. I mean, again, that was
 4 grotesque mismanagement, that could have been
 5 prevented. You can't prevent a hurricane, you
 6 can't prevent floods, but you certainly can try
 7 and start reducing the moral hazard that we've
 8 allowed to explode, quite honestly, by the
 9 federal government rushing in immediately, no
 10 questions asked, just tell us how big a check you
 11 want. What can you do in your new role to try
 12 and start reducing over time the moral hazard
 13 that we have created in this country with federal
 14 disaster relief?

15 GOVERNOR NOEM: Well, Senator
 16 emergencies and disasters are always locally led.
 17 They're led by the local communities and leaders,
 18 and that's because they're much more responsive
 19 and much better informed on how to bring relief
 20 and to get those emergency services there to meet
 21 the need. Then it's state supported and
 22 federally resourced, which means that when we
 23 come in that we're supporting what the mission
 24 is, what those emergency operations and plans
 25 are, that the local city and county, and then

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1 and how they were trying to manipulate the
 2 American people. We saw it in elections and
 3 Russia influence as well, and so ensuring that
 4 they can't do that in the future under any
 5 administration would be a priority, that they
 6 stay doing what they're supposed to do and
 7 hardening our systems and working with local
 8 officials to do that is a priority, and I'd look
 9 forward to working with you on legislation should
 10 you wish to rein them in.

11 SENATOR JOHNSON: So, the first step in
 12 that process is to expose the truth to find out
 13 who these backed actors were, expose who they
 14 were, hold them accountable.

15 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yes.

16 SENATOR JOHNSON: I mean, that is
 17 crucial that we take that first step. So, again,
 18 look forward to working with you on that. The
 19 tragedy of the California fires, the more we
 20 learn, the more we understand that not only was
 21 it predictable, it was predicted, which means it
 22 was preventable. Again, you can't prevent the
 23 initiation of those fires, but you certainly
 24 prevent them from raging into the tragedy that
 25 they became, the dozens of people who've lost

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1 also the state has implemented and do what we can
 2 to fulfill the mission of our programs.
 3 One of the things that FEMA's not doing
 4 today that I think we should be doing is
 5 streamlining communications. We saw this in New
 6 Orleans, we saw it in other terrorist attacks in
 7 the country, and you just referenced it as well
 8 about the American people not getting the truth,
 9 Senators not getting the truth and the
 10 transparency that we need is that I believe FEMA
 11 can always put out a blueprint for what a
 12 response would be should something terrible
 13 happen.

14 And when we look at the Secret Service,
 15 what happened in Butler, we saw that
 16 communication was an issue, that the Secret
 17 Service wasn't communicating, and balls were
 18 getting dropped with local authorities, local law
 19 enforcement, and we can put forward a blueprint
 20 for how communication can happen and be
 21 streamlined between the federal government, the
 22 state, and the local entities. So, that should
 23 something happen, this is how we talk to each
 24 other, to make sure that the public has the
 25 facts, they're not getting misinformation, which

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1 happened with the New Orleans terror attack just
 2 recently, but also up in Pennsylvania as well.
 3 That blueprint is what we do at the
 4 state level that FEMA has failed to do, to
 5 proactively educate the public on what
 6 everybody's roles are, what we do should
 7 something happen, whether it be a natural
 8 disaster or a terrorist attack or an emergency
 9 response is needed, that we can put out those
 10 blueprints ahead of time, educate people, train
 11 those local entities, which they currently do to
 12 a certain extent today, but not good enough to
 13 really know that not only can the resources be
 14 pre-deployed in many of these situations so that
 15 they're more readily accessible, but also how are
 16 we going to communicate and make sure everybody's
 17 on the same page so that we can be much more
 18 efficient.

19 I wish that we would've had different
 20 leadership and a different governor in
 21 California, or we might have a different result
 22 there. But in the Department of Homeland
 23 Security, we can do all that we can to make sure
 24 that the people that live in California know that
 25 they're going to get a response from the federal

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1 SENATOR GALLEG: Thank you, Chairman.
 2 Thank you, Governor, for your attendance and I
 3 appreciate us meeting last week and our frank
 4 conversation. So, following up to our
 5 conversation, in recent years, I've been in very
 6 close contact with our Arizona border
 7 communities, which are unlike other border
 8 communities and about the funding needs to
 9 address migrant influxes through the shelter and
 10 services program or SSP. Without this funding
 11 border communities must bear all the financial
 12 burden for national immigration challenges and
 13 the broken border in general. So, that means
 14 police, fire, hospital systems in general,
 15 anything of that. And at the same time, they'll
 16 also face the potential challenges of street
 17 releases. And again, these are very small towns
 18 on the border, so having thousands of people
 19 being released becomes both burdensome security
 20 issues and just not fair to them. And we get
 21 lumped in with places like New York and Chicago
 22 about how they do their shelter programs.

23 Our shelter programs are not the same
 24 as New York and Chicago. We do not permanently
 25 put people in apartments or anything of that

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1 government that's appropriate, and we did all
 2 that we could to make sure that they had the
 3 information ahead of time so they could protect
 4 themselves when they do have a failure in
 5 leadership like we've seen.

6 SENATOR JOHNSON: Thank you and good
 7 luck.

8 GOVERNOR NOEM: You bet.

9 SENATOR PAUL: Since Senator Johnson
 10 brought up California fires, I have to interject
 11 here. We talked about burn policies, these are
 12 local policies, how we try to not have so much
 13 brush and things like that. They're also next to
 14 the largest body of water in the world, the
 15 Pacific Ocean. So, I see these homes all burning
 16 on the beach in Malibu, and I'm like, "Wow, if
 17 they just had a generator and a hose, you start
 18 sucking the water out of the Pacific Ocean." But
 19 you could do more than that. You could pump it
 20 and put it in cisterns up in the hills a mile or
 21 two in. It doesn't rain very much there, but why
 22 don't they take the ocean water, put it in
 23 cisterns and have a bunch of water ready when a
 24 wildfire shows up, but it's like once again, bad
 25 local government. Senator Gallego.

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1 nature. We are trying to move people away from
 2 the border so that way they don't become a burden
 3 on these very, very small communities. So, I'm
 4 very highly concerned, as I told you in our
 5 meeting when the SSP program becomes politicized
 6 and to the point where we get lumped in with
 7 those programs, I don't think are effective and
 8 are actually counterproductive and it ends up
 9 depriving our small Arizona borders of these
 10 very, very vital funds that they need. So, as
 11 DHS Secretary, how would you ensure that border
 12 communities are not left to respond to and pay
 13 for these immigration influxes, the broken border
 14 system on their own? And when you commit to
 15 helping really not politicize or just join the
 16 SSP program to the point where places that are
 17 doing things correctly like Yuma, Arizona, like
 18 Pima County, like Cochise County, aren't lumped
 19 in with the people that are doing things
 20 incorrectly like New York State and Chicago.

21 GOVERNOR NOEM: Well, Senator, thank
 22 you for the conversation in your office about the
 23 program, FEMA, the southern border, and the
 24 challenges and then also the difference between
 25 your state and how you utilize funds versus other

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24 (Pages 90 - 93)

1 states. I would say that, my hope is that if
 2 given the opportunity to serve as secretary, that
 3 the federal government would no longer, and I
 4 believe as President Trump has promised the
 5 American people facilitate an illegal alien
 6 invasion and that your communities in Arizona
 7 would no longer have the issue with having people
 8 in your small towns and communities that you need
 9 to figure out how to take care of and get them to
 10 where they want to go in other places of the
 11 country.

12 The President has promised he will
 13 secure the border that we will uphold our
 14 nation's laws and that he will do that to the
 15 benefit and be putting America first again. So,
 16 I know we talked extensively about the SSP
 17 program and how you've utilized it, but getting
 18 these programs back to what they were intended is
 19 important to FEMA as a disaster response agency,
 20 and some of the facilities that have been
 21 utilizing these types of funds and dollars need
 22 to be reevaluated and to make sure that it's
 23 truly doing the service that is upholding our
 24 nation's laws.

25 SENATOR GALLEGOS: And certainly, I

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1 think the mistakes that other states have taken
 2 on. Moving on, in Arizona, we have large parts
 3 of the board, they run through tribal lands. We
 4 have 22 federally recognized tribes. We have
 5 great relationships with these tribes. They want
 6 to be collaborative partners when it comes to
 7 border security. And then we have some great
 8 programs that have worked in the past. For
 9 example, the Shadow Wolves Program with the
 10 Tohono O'odham Nation is a really good example,
 11 collaborative program of tribal law enforcement
 12 that worked with DHS to make sure they stop human
 13 smuggling and cartels going through the borders.
 14 But as DHS Secretary, what is your plan to
 15 consult with our border tribes and work together
 16 to balance both national security but also their
 17 sovereignty?

18 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yeah. Well, Senator, I
 19 believe that my experience as governor and my
 20 relationship with working with our tribes is
 21 going to be an incredible powerful tool for me to
 22 bring to bear at the Department of Homeland
 23 Security to work on how we secure our southern
 24 border but still respect their sovereignty and
 25 still be able to work with them. This year, when

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1 understand reevaluating especially how some of
 2 these states have been using it and in an ideal
 3 world, we don't have to have a program like that
 4 because we don't have this mass of humanity
 5 that's coming towards our borders, but even under
 6 the first Trump administration, we actually still
 7 needed it also. So, this is why my concern is to
 8 not get rid of this program because again, these
 9 small communities, I'm talking communities of
 10 maybe 10,000 people, maybe only six or seven cops
 11 are going to end up really bearing the brunt and
 12 we are not a big state. We can't really
 13 compensate for these types of losses. These
 14 small communities are also largely, you come from
 15 a rural state, counties that are largely rural
 16 and with a lot of federal land so that actually
 17 don't even have a tax base.

18 So, when the broken immigration system
 19 sends people to these borders and these
 20 communities don't have enough money to pay for
 21 cops, firefighters over time for hospital
 22 systems, it's that type of program that keeps
 23 these small communities afloat. So, just want to
 24 make sure that again, this doesn't not become
 25 politicized and that we are kept separate from I

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1 looking at public safety issues that we had in
 2 South Dakota and their lack of ability to hire
 3 tribal officers on our reservations in South
 4 Dakota, I offered to train federal law
 5 enforcement officers, BIA officers, but also
 6 their tribal police in South Dakota at no cost to
 7 our tribes. And it's been an incredible powerful
 8 tool that we've had to build relationships.
 9 Those tribal police had the chance to go through
 10 academy with the local maybe deputies from the
 11 counties and the state highway patrol troopers
 12 that were coming on board, and those
 13 relationships have built partnerships in our
 14 state that we didn't have before.

15 The Shadow Wolf training opportunity is
 16 incredible. That was down in Arizona that you
 17 spoke of too, and in looking into that program,
 18 I'd like to continue to build on that and
 19 perpetuate in the future so that our tribes have
 20 an opportunity to have a secure border but also
 21 have it reflect their values and their culture
 22 and have their own people be a part of the
 23 solution and then even when it comes to the
 24 infrastructure of the wall that we're respecting
 25 that and their landscapes and their land as well.

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<p>1 So, I look forward to working with you as we move 2 into this next administration to be able to 3 protect our country and then work and respect our 4 tribes as we do so.</p> <p>5 SENATOR GALLEGGO: Thank you. And the 6 President Trump and some of his other potential 7 staff and advisors have been very vocal about 8 implementing a mass deportation strategy, talking 9 to my agricultural community, my dairy community, 10 they have concerns that this approach will lead 11 to workforce shortages that will further drive up 12 the costs of everything and something that we 13 have really been working hard to cross, I think a 14 bipartisan and a bipartisan manner to bring down 15 the costs of everything and unfortunately this 16 would reignite inflation. What is your plan to 17 ensure safe and legal immigration processes for 18 agricultural workers while protecting local 19 agricultural operations, including those both of 20 our home states?</p> <p>21 GOVERNOR NOEM: Well, Senator, the 22 President and President Trump has been very clear 23 that his priority is going to be deporting 24 criminals, those who have broken our laws and 25 perpetuated violence in our communities. That'll</p>	<p>1 ago today, we met in probably the coldest day 2 I've ever been in my life in Iowa --</p> <p>3 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yeah, that's true.</p> <p>4 SENATOR MORENO: ... as you and I were 5 making phone calls and whipping up votes for 6 Republicans in Iowa, my wife Bridget, who's here, 7 got a chance to meet you and we left Iowa saying, 8 "That person's really going to go far," and here 9 we are nine years later, you've been an amazing 10 governor, amazing Congresswoman, and now you're 11 going to make an even better Secretary of the 12 Department of Homeland Security. So, I think 13 sometimes in D.C. we tend to complicate things. 14 There is a current Secretary of Homeland 15 Security, so why don't we take this opportunity 16 to do a little job review and compare and 17 contrast him to you. So, if you don't mind, I'll 18 ask you some questions and you can give me an 19 answer. Secretary Mayorkas allowed about, you 20 said it, just about 400 people on the terror 21 watch list to come into this country legally. If 22 you were confirmed as Secretary of Homeland 23 Security, how many people on the terror watch 24 list would you allow into this country?</p> <p>25 GOVERNOR NOEM: Well, Senator, we would</p>
<p>Page 98</p> <p>1 be the priority. And as I spoke earlier with our 2 statistics, having over 425,000 of those with 3 criminal convictions in our country, that will be 4 a focus that we need to tackle right away, and 5 it'll be a big one. Beyond that, his next 6 priority is going to be those with final removal 7 orders and focus on those individuals who have 8 long overstayed and that there is a consequence 9 for ignoring our federal laws. Beyond that, 10 we'll continue conversations. As you know, I'm a 11 farmer and a rancher and come from an 12 agricultural state and we'll work together to 13 make sure that laws are followed. It is the 14 Senate and the house that puts forward the laws. 15 I as secretary uphold the law, so you determine 16 what that is and debate and discussion. I'll be 17 transparent and share as much information and 18 insight as I have with my background and 19 experience and continue to work with you.</p> <p>20 SENATOR GALLEGGO: (Indiscernible).</p> <p>21 SENATOR PAUL: Senator Moreno.</p> <p>22 SENATOR MORENO: First of all, thank 23 you, Governor, for being here for testifying 24 before this committee and for your service, not 25 just to your state but to America. Nine years</p>	<p>Page 100</p> <p>1 work every single day until that number was zero. 2 And if you look at the previous Trump 3 administration over his entire four years in 4 comparison to Joe Biden's number President Trump, 5 it was 11 that were then removed from the country 6 and faced consequences. When you look at the 382 7 that Joe Biden has let in and the policies 8 continue, is shocking and needs to be changed 9 immediately.</p> <p>10 SENATOR MORENO: Mayorkas let in about 11 12,000 murderers, how many would you target to 12 let into this country?</p> <p>13 GOVERNOR NOEM: My goal every day would 14 be to have no murderers allowed into this country 15 and our communities.</p> <p>16 SENATOR MORENO: Mayorkas allowed 17 16,000 rapists, how many would you target to let 18 in?</p> <p>19 GOVERNOR NOEM: Every day I'd work to 20 make sure that there was none let into this 21 country.</p> <p>22 SENATOR MORENO: He let 600,000 -- 23 Mayorkas, 600,000, people with criminal 24 convictions, how many would you allow in?</p> <p>25 GOVERNOR NOEM: We would work every day</p>

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<p>1 to make sure people are safe and that those with 2 criminal convictions are immediately removed. 3 SENATOR MORENO: How many private jets 4 would you have the United States taxpayers have 5 fly into foreign countries to pick up people to 6 bring them here. 7 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yeah. Senator, we will 8 no longer be undertaking that mission at the 9 Department of Homeland Security. 10 SENATOR MORENO: So, not 700,000 11 individuals on private jets over the last four 12 years, you would not have any? 13 GOVERNOR NOEM: No. I'll be working 14 with President Trump to put in place his agenda 15 and adherence to our federal laws. 16 SENATOR MORENO: And how many illegals 17 will you plan to house in luxury hotel rooms in 18 Manhattan at a cost of \$6,000 per month? 19 GOVERNOR NOEM: Sir, clearly, Senator, 20 during this election, the American people said 21 they did not support that and that that would not 22 be a part of this new administration. 23 SENATOR MORENO: How about sex change 24 operations for illegals, how many of those would 25 you suspect you would fund?</p>	Page 102	<p>1 GOVERNOR NOEM: Oh, Senator, my hope is 2 that that would be true. Yes. 3 SENATOR MORENO: Let's switch to 4 another part of the disgraceful immigration laws 5 that Biden and Mayorkas, who objectively, by the 6 way, objectively, has been the worst cabinet 7 member ever in the history of the United States 8 of America. Let's talk about temporary 9 protective status. Temporary being the operative 10 word. Mayorkas and Biden just extended temporary 11 protective status again through 2027. Will you 12 continue to corrupt TPS to allow some sort of 13 open borders agenda and will you use hot weather 14 of 80 degrees and sunny beaches in El Salvador as 15 a reason why people have to stay in America and 16 not safely return? 17 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yeah, Senator, this 18 program has been abused and manipulated by the 19 Biden administration and that will no longer be 20 allowed to allow that and these extensions going 21 forward the way that they are, the program was 22 intended to be temporary and this extension of 23 over 600,000 Venezuelans as well is alarming when 24 you look at what we've seen in different states, 25 including Colorado with gangs doing damage and</p>
<p>1 GOVERNOR NOEM: Senator, I believe that 2 the Department of Homeland Security will be 3 reevaluating its mission in this country to not 4 allow that going forward under President Trump's 5 goals. 6 SENATOR MORENO: And if you had any 7 legal migrant that was in this country and they 8 committed a crime, would you offer them airfare 9 from one state to another to evade law 10 enforcement? 11 GOVERNOR NOEM: Sir, I will be 12 following this nation's laws and the Constitution 13 and make sure that all laws are adhered to. 14 SENATOR MORENO: And if you had been 15 the head of the Department of Homeland Security a 16 year or so ago, would you have closed a detention 17 center in Georgia that would've allowed the 18 release of somebody charged with a crime? 19 GOVERNOR NOEM: Sir, I don't have the 20 specifics to that situation, but certainly that 21 would not be something that I would want to have 22 under my watch. 23 SENATOR MORENO: So, just to be clear, 24 Laken Riley would be alive today if you had been 25 the Secretary of Homeland Security?</p>	Page 103	<p>1 harming the individuals and the people that live 2 there. 3 SENATOR MORENO: And in terms of our 4 border, like the physical border, I've been there 5 many times. You've been there many times. Who 6 should be in charge? Who should have operational 7 control of our border? The United States 8 government or the Mexican drug cartels? 9 GOVERNOR NOEM: Oh, Senator, the United 10 States needs to control our borders and secure 11 them. 12 SENATOR MORENO: So, if this were a job 13 interview in the private sector and you had 14 somebody like Alejandro Mayorkas in charge and we 15 had the opportunity to upgrade to you, this would 16 be the greatest upgrade in history of the United 17 States of America. But I'm going to end my time 18 with a startling statistic and actually a 19 challenge to the Democrat party. When Mayorkas 20 was confirmed, every single Democrat voted to 21 confirm him, and six Republicans joined all 50 22 Democrats in that confirmation. If we get to the 23 vote, and hopefully Chairman, we could do that 24 Monday, because we cannot wait one single day 25 without you being in charge of that department.</p>

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<p>1 We should have 100 percent; 100 Senators vote for 2 your confirmation.</p> <p>3 This will be the litmus test in my mind 4 as to whether we have a Democrat party that's 5 actually serious about doing bipartisan things 6 like securing this country and protecting our 7 citizens. Any Democrat that voted for Mayorkas 8 that does not vote for you should be in front of 9 their voters and removed from office. Thank you 10 for serving, Brian. Thank you for being here, 11 for putting up with the nonsense that you guys 12 have had to put up with over the years. You are 13 going to make an amazing Secretary of Homeland 14 Security. Thank you for being here.</p> <p>15 GOVERNOR NOEM: Thank you, Senator.</p> <p>16 SENATOR PAUL: Senator Slotkin.</p> <p>17 SENATOR SLOTKIN: Thanks for being here 18 and thanks for our time in my office, Governor. 19 I'm a former CIA officer, joined right after 9/11 20 and served three tours in Iraq alongside the 21 military. I'm actually the first CIA officer in 22 the Senate and to me the most important thing 23 again as a Democrat from a state that Trump won, 24 right, on the same ballot we both won. I 25 understand we're going to have different policy</p>	<p>1 very elite military unit. I mean, it's horrible. 2 It's one of the hardest things to catch the sort 3 of lone wolf, radicalized American citizen, but I 4 want to protect ourselves. Our most recent 5 examples of domestic terrorism we're not what 6 we've spent the majority talking about today, 7 crime from a migrant, and I don't dispute there 8 is crime, but I just want to know and I want to 9 hear from you as an intelligence officer that 10 you're going to speak about real threats and not 11 blow something up, politicize something, make 12 something more exciting because that's maybe what 13 the President wants to hear, but your mission to 14 protect and defend the Constitution means calling 15 honestly what the threats are to the country. 16 Can you just give me a yes or no, please?</p> <p>17 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yes, Senator. I will 18 be as transparent and factual every day with you 19 and the American people as possible based on the 20 information that I have. I don't know if the 21 investigations are closed in New Orleans and in 22 Nevada, but what we know so far and needs to be 23 relayed to the American people, needs to be the 24 truth and facts.</p> <p>25 SENATOR SLOTKIN: Yeah, I'd ask that.</p>
<p>Page 106</p> <p>1 opinions. I certainly understand that the 2 President or incoming President has the right to 3 nominate whoever he wants. Those are not the 4 issues for me that I'm going to spend my time on. 5 The ones that I care about the most relate to the 6 mission of the organization when it was founded, 7 protecting the homeland, and I think to me, it's 8 one thing when there's campaign rhetoric or 9 political politicization of things, everyone does 10 that on both sides of the aisle in this committee 11 and in our line of work, but when it comes to 12 actually protecting the country, you do have to 13 be clear and honest about facts and not conflate 14 things.</p> <p>15 So, it's just important to me that I 16 know, particularly since you do have one of the 17 intelligence agencies within the Department of 18 Homeland Security, that you're going to call a 19 spade a spade, right? The most recent acts of 20 domestic terrorism in New Orleans, horrible 21 incident in Nevada had nothing to do with 22 migrants. Correct?</p> <p>23 GOVERNOR NOEM: Correct.</p> <p>24 SENATOR SLOTKIN: They were homegrown 25 American citizens. One of them was actually in a</p>	<p>1 We've talked a lot about border security. As a 2 CIA officer, I think one of the only people on 3 this committee who's actually worked on 4 protecting the homeland. I'm a Middle East 5 terrorism and militia expert by training, so I 6 believe deeply in it and every country of the 7 world gets to decide who comes inside its 8 borders. That's not a radical concept, but I 9 think I've been open with this committee that it 10 is also on us to fix the deeply broken legal 11 immigration system. I'm glad to hear that you're 12 going to carry out the laws on the immigration 13 system. Democrats and Republicans are to blame 14 that we haven't fixed this system, but I also 15 believe you can't fully control the border unless 16 you give people that we need for our companies, 17 for our economy a legal vetted way to come here. 18 So, do you believe in legal vetted immigration 19 and that we need more of it in the United States?</p> <p>20 GOVERNOR NOEM: I do believe we need to 21 follow our legal immigration laws and that it 22 needs to be vetted. We need more resources, I 23 believe in some of the elements of this to ensure 24 that we're --</p> <p>25 SENATOR SLOTKIN: Do you believe that</p>

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<p>1 our economy depends and needs some level, just 2 like your family came from Norway and on economic 3 drive and wanted a better life --</p> <p>4 GOVERNOR NOEM: Well, immigration's 5 always been a part of our history and will be a 6 part of our future. We just need to make sure 7 that we're adhering to our nation's laws, which 8 this body has the ability to --</p> <p>9 SENATOR SLOTKIN: I'm with you, I'm 10 with you.</p> <p>11 GOVERNOR NOEM: ... continue to change 12 and to put in place.</p> <p>13 SENATOR SLOTKIN: Again, going back to 14 the fact that you will pledge an oath to the 15 Constitution, not to President Trump. Just like 16 every other nominee, President Trump said in 17 November that he's willing to use law 18 enforcement, National Guard, or even active-duty 19 military to go after the threat from within the 20 United States. I don't know exactly what he was 21 talking about, but we have recent examples from 22 your predecessors at DHS where federal law 23 enforcement were sent into a state, in this case 24 Oregon without coordination with the governor. 25 Those federal law enforcement officers at the</p>	Page 110	<p>1 SENATOR SLOTKIN: I just to know you're 2 a former governor, you can imagine that if Joe 3 Biden sent in 700 federal law enforcement under 4 Secretary Mayorkas without coordinating with you, 5 I think we can agree you'd be a little upset. 6 So, I just ask that you give the same respect for 7 coordination and that we are very sensitive. 8 People are worried about politicizing of law 9 enforcement and the uniformed military. That's a 10 bad thing. I hope we can agree. Lastly, I will 11 just say, look forward to looking at the northern 12 border, the Gordie Howe Bridge, your help 13 staffing that. We know you are right now across 14 many administrations, we haven't met our staffing 15 goals at DHS and that's a problem, so we really 16 want to make sure that opens on time.</p> <p>17 But I also want your assurances. You 18 received FEMA assistance from Joe Biden's 19 administration, right? You had historic floods. 20 You asked and requested of the administration, 21 and you were given millions of dollars to help 22 with that. I understand you don't like Gavin 23 Newsom, but can you say in front of the American 24 people that you will open the books to this 25 committee who does have oversight over FEMA, that</p>
<p>1 time were putting down threats to federal 2 buildings and they were legitimate threats. I 3 don't dispute, there was destruction of property 4 going on during a bunch of protests and riots, so 5 I don't dispute that. But they weren't wearing 6 insignia. We talked about this. They weren't 7 wearing any markings, so people were arrested by 8 folks in fatigues with no names, no idea who they 9 were, like right out of a bad Hollywood movie. 10 Okay. If the President asks you to send in 11 federal law enforcement to a state without 12 coordination of that, Governor, would you support 13 that action?</p> <p>14 GOVERNOR NOEM: Senator, my job, if 15 nominated, and sworn in as Secretary of Homeland 16 Security, is to uphold the Constitution and to 17 uphold --</p> <p>18 SENATOR SLOTKIN: So, you will push 19 back --</p> <p>20 GOVERNOR NOEM: ... the rules of this 21 country. Yes, that will be the oath and the 22 pledge that I will be making. And my goal also 23 is to work with you to ensure that we have 24 situations that are always appropriate, that we 25 are well-defined on who we are --</p>	Page 111	<p>1 you will open the books in a bipartisan way to 2 ensure whether it's North Carolina or California 3 or anywhere in between, that the American people 4 can know that you are not playing politics with 5 disaster assistance?</p> <p>6 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yes. Senator, I'll 7 work with you in this committee to make sure I'm 8 following the federal law and ensuring that you 9 have information and transparency from us and 10 from DHS and FEMA.</p> <p>11 SENATOR SLOTKIN: Thank you. 12 Appreciate it. Yield back.</p> <p>13 SENATOR PAUL: Senator Lankford.</p> <p>14 SENATOR LANKFORD: Governor Noem, great 15 to see you.</p> <p>16 GOVERNOR NOEM: Great to see you too.</p> <p>17 SENATOR LANKFORD: Thanks for being 18 here. Thanks for accepting this nod that the 19 President has given you. For, Brian, thanks. 20 Both of you, you've walked through a lot. I have 21 had the privilege of knowing you for a very long 22 time since we served together in the House of 23 Representatives, so I have the benefit of knowing 24 your qualifications and how strong you are in all 25 these background issues and how hard you work on</p>

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1 these things because I've seen it firsthand. So,
 2 I appreciate you stepping into this because a lot
 3 of attention across the country will be focused
 4 on this. You know that full well and you've
 5 stepped into it. For Governor Landry, my state
 6 and many folks in my state are praying for you
 7 and for your state. You've done a great job in
 8 leadership at this moment in a very, very tough
 9 time for Louisiana, and we don't want to see acts
 10 of terrorism anywhere in our country and it's
 11 incredibly difficult days for a governor, so
 12 thanks for your leadership on that as well. I
 13 also have to tell you, Kristi, I've whined to my
 14 wife occasionally about the temperature that's
 15 coming on Monday. I'm very excited about Trump's
 16 inaugural, but we're all going to be sitting
 17 outside in about 12 degrees. And I thought just
 18 for fun, I would check South Dakota on Monday,
 19 it's one, for a high, for a high.

20 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yeah, for a high.

21 SENATOR LANKFORD: And so, I'm going to
 22 stop whining about the temperature Monday here in
 23 Washington, D.C. on it. Look, I'm going to run
 24 through a couple of things here because I know
 25 you, not everybody in Oklahoma knows you. The

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1 One app?
 2 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yes, Senator. We will
 3 eliminate the CBP One app, maintain some of the
 4 data that's in it that's critical to knowing
 5 who's in our country, but that app will no longer
 6 be in use.
 7 SENATOR LANKFORD: Thank you. No other
 8 President has ever used the parole authority,
 9 just in general, humanitarian parole to
 10 facilitate faster processing of aliens into our
 11 country, which leads to the catch and release
 12 we've all heard about. So, the Oklahomans that I
 13 talked to say, "Are we about to end the abuse of
 14 parole and end catch and release? Is that about
 15 to stop?"

16 GOVERNOR NOEM: Senator, President
 17 Trump's been very clear that he will end catch
 18 and release.

19 SENATOR LANKFORD: Terrific. Folks
 20 want to know, will you use your authority with
 21 the funds that are given to you by Congress to
 22 actually build more wall rather than use the
 23 funding that's given to you as the Biden
 24 administration did to do environmental
 25 remediation around the border rather than actual

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1 questions that I get from people though in
 2 Oklahoma, I want to be able to run past you
 3 because they want to be able to know the answer
 4 to these things, so I'm just going to blitz
 5 through a whole bunch of them. Will you use the
 6 legal authority that DHS already has to be able
 7 to close our border?

8 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yes, Senator. I will
 9 work with President Trump to ensure that we're
 10 securing our border.

11 SENATOR LANKFORD: Thank you. There's
 12 a lot of things that this Congress needs to do,
 13 has already been mentioned by Senator Slotkin as
 14 well, that we need you to be able to close
 15 loopholes to be able to give you additional
 16 authority, but there's a tremendous amount of
 17 authority currently not being used in Oklahoma,
 18 as you're saying, is that about to be used? And
 19 they'll be grateful to be able to hear that. No
 20 other President has ever created a phone app to
 21 be able to facilitate a faster processing of
 22 aliens in, called the CBP One app. It's been
 23 mentioned several times here. Will you use your
 24 authority to stop facilitating faster processing
 25 of illegal aliens into our country with the CBP

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1 border wall and border structure?
 2 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yeah. Senator,
 3 President Trump has been clear that he wants to
 4 build the wall.

5 SENATOR LANKFORD: So, do we. So, will
 6 you use your authority to be able to scan more
 7 vehicles and obviously we've got to get you the
 8 funding to be able to do this, to be able to scan
 9 more vehicles and individuals that are carrying
 10 Fentanyl into our country through our ports of
 11 entry.

12 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yes, Senator. We will
 13 continue to use technologies but hopefully be
 14 able to use more with the resources that were
 15 granted to scan those vehicles and know what's
 16 coming in and out of this country.

17 SENATOR LANKFORD: Last year, FEMA
 18 employees during disaster relief were instructed
 19 by one of their supervisors that if they see a
 20 Trump sign or a Trump flag flying to skip that
 21 house, to not stop by there and tell them what
 22 their federal government can do for them. Will
 23 you allow FEMA employees or any within DHS to
 24 politicize their role and to pick and choose who
 25 gets help and who doesn't as an American?

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<p>1 GOVERNOR NOEM: Senator, under 2 President Trump's administration, disaster and 3 emergency relief will not be handed out with 4 political bias. Every American will be responded 5 to and treated equally.</p> <p>6 SENATOR LANKFORD: That's what folks 7 want to know. Will you review the Secret Service 8 responsibilities to be able to go back through it 9 and to say, are they focused on their primary 10 mission or is there something you could distract? 11 Secret Service still chases down financial 12 crimes, they're still chasing down child 13 exploitation. Those are serious things for 14 Treasury or for FBI to do, but there's a question 15 is if that's the first priority for Secret 16 Service?</p> <p>17 GOVERNOR NOEM: Senator, the Secret 18 Service is in need of dramatic reforms. They do 19 have a protective detail element that is their 20 priority and also an investigation side. My 21 understanding is that that investigation side is 22 often used to train the protective detailed 23 officers, but clearly, they are not focusing on 24 what their true duty is, and it needs to get back 25 onto what they were created for and that was the</p>	<p>1 that. Let me tell you another challenge we've 2 had with Homeland Security in the past four 3 years. When we ask for data and for information, 4 we get, "I'll get back to you on that." When we 5 ask again and again and again and again, we get 6 the same statement, "I'll get back to you on 7 that." Now, I can go down the street to the 8 command center, where they actually get the data 9 in live, and they have it up on big screens and 10 they're tracking exactly what's happening on the 11 southern border to the minute, but if I ask for 12 what happened last month, they'll say, "We're 13 still gathering that data." We're not asking for 14 anything other than what Congress is supposed to 15 get. That's the ability to be able to see data 16 and to have real oversight over DHS and that has 17 been a failure of this DHS along with multiple 18 other issues on that. When we request the data 19 for basic things like, how many special interest 20 aliens were allowed across the border.</p> <p>21 If it was last year, we had to find out 22 on our own. It was 70,000 people that were 23 targeted by this administration as a potential 24 national security risk that were not just found 25 at the border that were released when they were</p>
<p>Page 118</p> <p>1 protective detail, mission, and emergency 2 situations that they need to help plan and 3 prepare for and defend.</p> <p>4 SENATOR LANKFORD: Thank you. This 5 committee made a request to the Secretary of 6 Homeland Security last year, and by the way, also 7 the head of the FBI to be able to come before 8 this committee and to do what every Secretary of 9 Homeland Security has done for the last 20 years, 10 every single year, unbroken until last year. And 11 then the secretary refused to come before this 12 committee in an open session and talk about 13 national threats. Now, the former Chairman 14 protested strongly to the Biden administration 15 and DHS, they weren't coming, but they still 16 refused to be able to come. Will you come before 17 this committee and talk about the threats openly 18 so the American people can hear them in a public 19 forum?</p> <p>20 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yes. Senator, Senator 21 Peters, and I discussed this quite a bit in our 22 meeting as well, and I have committed to come and 23 give that briefing to this committee and to the 24 American people.</p> <p>25 SENATOR LANKFORD: Thank you. We need</p>	<p>Page 120</p> <p>1 found at the border. 70,000 people just from 2 last year in the country right now that this 3 administration declared at the border, they're a 4 potential national security risk. Now, I know 5 you're not going to do that, but when we ask for 6 the data and for the information, when we say, 7 "How's the National Vetting Center working?" Do 8 you have the connection to be able to screen 9 individuals there? We're just doing our 10 oversight responsibility. You've served in 11 Congress before and did a great job on that and 12 did oversight. We want to still be able to do 13 the same thing. Will you provide data to this 14 committee so that we can cooperate with you to 15 help?</p> <p>16 GOVERNOR NOEM: Senator, I will follow 17 the law and be transparent with you and allow you 18 to do the due diligence towards oversight that 19 you're tasked with.</p> <p>20 SENATOR LANKFORD: I have absolutely no 21 doubt about that, Governor. I have absolutely no 22 doubt, looking forward to you serving in that 23 role.</p> <p>24 GOVERNOR NOEM: Thank you.</p> <p>25 SENATOR LANKFORD: Thank you.</p>
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1 GOVERNOR NOEM: Thank you.
 2 SENATOR PAUL: Well, congratulations,
 3 Governor Noem. You are almost done.
 4 GOVERNOR NOEM: Okay.
 5 SENATOR PAUL: We've been through a lot
 6 of questions. I think you've handled the
 7 questions very well and I'm ask a couple of
 8 questions, and I think the ranking member has a
 9 few and I think we'll be done very shortly. I
 10 think a lot of Americans, including some
 11 conservatives misunderstand the First Amendment.
 12 They think the First Amendment says that
 13 "Facebook has to publish my opinion," or, "The
 14 Wall Street Journal has to publish my opinion,"
 15 or "We need to force them to be fair." That's
 16 not what the First Amendment's about at all.
 17 The First Amendment really doesn't
 18 apply to telling private companies what we can or
 19 cannot say. YouTube censored me and I despise
 20 their policy. They actually took down speeches I
 21 made on the floor, but really, I don't have a
 22 legal recourse other than I can complain about
 23 YouTube being unfair and not hosting both sides
 24 of an issue. However, with the government
 25 though, there is a rule. The First Amendment

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1 who said that the pushiness, the coerciveness of
 2 government meeting with them was unprecedented
 3 and that they pushed back. But he also said
 4 worse than them just sort of telling him he
 5 should restrict speech; they also threatened him.
 6 They threatened to come after him through
 7 antitrust law, they threatened to remove parts of
 8 Section 230 of the liability protection.
 9 Just to imagine this bully nature of
 10 government, and I know you're opposed to that,
 11 but if you're confirmed and you're in a position
 12 of saying, "We're just no longer sending people
 13 to meet with media," and the way I describe it is
 14 to talk about constitutionally protected speech.
 15 Because some will say, "Oh, well, what about
 16 pornography or what about child trafficking?"
 17 Those are illegal. Those are not
 18 constitutionally protected speech. You have
 19 every ability to meet with that. But for
 20 constitutionally protected speech, will you tell
 21 us in America that you will no longer be sending
 22 government agents to meet with the media?
 23 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yes, Senator. I'll
 24 work with you to ensure that civil rights and
 25 liberties are protected and that we are not in

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1 specifically says, "Congress shall pass no law
 2 banning or abridging speech," and this is what
 3 really got us worried about what, not only the
 4 FBI was doing, but the Department of Homeland
 5 Security actually meeting with these companies.
 6 SENATOR PAUL: ... on a weekly basis.
 7 And imagine the chilling effect of this, imagine
 8 that there are cameras here, that they're going
 9 to end their filming of this interview and then
 10 decide, "Well, what she said or what he said
 11 really was misinformation, and we should edit
 12 that out." Can you imagine? It's just hard for
 13 me to imagine that the media has not, which once
 14 defended the First Amendment, hasn't been in more
 15 of an uproar over the government meeting with the
 16 media to decide things. Some of this we didn't
 17 know, and then Elon Musk bought Twitter. People
 18 asked him, they said, "Well, you've paid \$44
 19 billion for Twitter. Isn't that too much?" And
 20 he said, "I paid \$44 billion to defend free
 21 speech."
 22 And it's been an amazing service, not
 23 only to open up the forum to more viewpoints, but
 24 to point out what the government was doing. In
 25 this last week, we heard from Mark Zuckerberg,

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1 the misinformation and disinformation space like
 2 the current DHS is.
 3 SENATOR PAUL: The only other thing I
 4 would ask on this basis is we will send requests,
 5 we sent requests previously, sometimes, and often
 6 bipartisan requests, for information. The
 7 Twitter files, Michael Schellenberger, Matt
 8 Taibbi, Bari Weiss did a great job of showing
 9 what was happening in Twitter and how they were
 10 cooperating with government. I think the other
 11 investigation that needs to occur is who are the
 12 people in government they were talking to? Do
 13 they still work at DHS, and can we make sure that
 14 they're not in a position of authority?
 15 And this is not something I'm going to
 16 tell you to do. It's just a request that you
 17 have your own investigation, that you have people
 18 who work for DHS to say, "We are going to look
 19 for people who are bringing their political bias
 20 to work and trying to influence speech and
 21 restrict speech based on their bias and help us
 22 in rooting that out and making sure that these
 23 people never again have that responsibility."
 24 Because I don't think there's ever been anything
 25 like this as far as the restriction of speech,

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1 and I think the election is largely going to stop
 2 and tilt things the other way. But will you help
 3 us by looking internally for those who are trying
 4 to restrict speech?

5 GOVERNOR NOEM: Senator, I look forward
 6 to working with you on that mission.

7 SENATOR PAUL: I don't have any other
 8 questions now, but I think Senator Peters and
 9 Senator Blumenthal, and we'll see how it goes.
 10 We're going to start with Senator Peters with one
 11 more five-minute round.

12 SENATOR PETERS: Yeah, I'll be fairly
 13 brief. We've had opportunity to talk at length
 14 about many issues, and again, I appreciate that,
 15 Governor. I just want to stress going forward,
 16 and we've heard a lot of comments here, I think
 17 there's been a fair amount of political theater.
 18 Not as much as I know exist in other committees,
 19 and I've always strived, and I know ranking
 20 member or now Chairman Paul share the notion that
 21 we want to be a fact-based committee and try to
 22 find tangible solutions to the tough problems
 23 that we face, and data is important. We've heard
 24 a lot of numbers being thrown around here, and I
 25 don't have time to go through and challenge those

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1 that spirit, I hope if confirmed that is exactly
 2 what you will be bringing to this office, and
 3 let's move away from this toxic political
 4 environment that we have in the country and
 5 celebrate what's great about our country in the
 6 spirit of bringing the American people together.

7 So, I have one question before we turn
 8 it over to other members. As a member of this
 9 committee, as well as the Armed Services
 10 Committee, I've focused a great deal on the safe
 11 integration of drones in our airspace while
 12 addressing the growing threats that drones
 13 possess. We certainly see what drones are doing
 14 in changing the face of warfare, whether it's in
 15 Ukraine and other battlefields around the world.
 16 We are very concerned about the weaponization of
 17 those drones and what it could mean to the
 18 security here in the United States. I've
 19 proposed comprehensive legislation to extend
 20 authorities beyond just the FBI and DOJ and
 21 Homeland Security to local law enforcement.

22 You mentioned in your comments about
 23 security for the Super Bowl, which is incredibly
 24 important, but we have to remember that that
 25 threat exists for all games. In fact, one of the

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1 numbers. Some of them we don't even know where
 2 they came from. I don't think that's helpful to
 3 the very important mission of confirm that you're
 4 going to be dealing with. So, I hope in the
 5 future, that we're actually dealing with facts.

6 You've mentioned many times that you do
 7 want to deal with facts and real data. And
 8 again, we heard a lot here that's not real data,
 9 and we should not operate that way. And if
 10 confirmed when we move forward, I'm going to look
 11 forward to working with you based on the facts
 12 and understand where the real threats are, how we
 13 need to appropriate resources to make sure we're
 14 meeting those threats.

15 And let's take this hyper-partisanship
 16 out of such an important issue of homeland
 17 security. We have way too much partisanship in
 18 this country, and it's resulted in a polarization
 19 of people here. We've got to come together as
 20 this country, we've got to lock arms and
 21 understand that we're all proud Americans, we all
 22 want to do what's best for the American people
 23 and solve the issues that are before us.

24 So, in that spirit, and certainly
 25 you've communicated that spirit to me, but in

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1 biggest supporters of my legislation is the NFL.
 2 In fact, we just had a recent playoff game that
 3 was delayed because of drones that flew into that
 4 playoff game. We are very concerned that you
 5 could have a drone with a grenade or an explosive
 6 device, which would be absolutely catastrophic.
 7 It's absolutely essential that we address this
 8 threat. What we're seeing around the world and
 9 what we're seeing in daily activities should be a
 10 concern. I think this is just a matter of time.
 11 It's not if, it's when, and we need to be on the
 12 front end of that.

13 And with that in mind, I want to remind
 14 folks that Congress just recently extended
 15 critical counter-UAS authority, counter-drone
 16 authority only for a short-time basis for the
 17 12th time. We only do these little, tiny short-
 18 term extensions, and we aren't dealing with the
 19 problem comprehensively as we should, and those
 20 are going to expire on March 14th, a very short
 21 time from now. And so, my question for you,
 22 Governor, is if confirmed as DHS Secretary, will
 23 you commit to working with me and my colleagues
 24 to pass durable, long-term authorities that will
 25 protect this country from what is a real threat,

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33 (Pages 126 - 129)

1 and it's just a matter of time? And I don't want
 2 to have a horrible incident occur, and people
 3 wonder why we didn't take action beforehand. So,
 4 please address that.

5 GOVERNOR NOEM: Senator, I look forward
 6 to working with you and this committee to address
 7 the threats we may face and the usage of drones
 8 in this country in relation to our national
 9 security interests and our homeland security
 10 interests. So, thank you for bringing up the
 11 conversation today, because it is one of the
 12 areas within DHS that we have a responsibility to
 13 address in cooperation with Congress.

14 SENATOR PETERS: And my first comments
 15 on bringing people together, please comment on
 16 that.

17 GOVERNOR NOEM: Oh, well, thank you,
 18 sir. Yes, no.

19 SENATOR PETERS: I didn't ask that
 20 question, but in my 24 seconds left.

21 GOVERNOR NOEM: I'm looking forward to
 22 working with everyone, Republicans and Democrats
 23 and everyone else in between, that in this
 24 country that is focused on keeping America safe
 25 and secure for our future. I would just point,

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1 GOVERNOR NOEM: Sure.
 2 SENATOR PETERS: So, it's data and
 3 facts that we can all agree on that drive our
 4 policy and not political theater. Would you
 5 agree?

6 GOVERNOR NOEM: Well, certainly, sir.
 7 We need to be addressing facts and information
 8 rather than political theater. We also need to
 9 speak truth to facts. So, I think it's important
 10 that we're willing to confront our challenges
 11 head on and have those conversations. And you'll
 12 see me back at your office door very soon to
 13 continue our work together.

14 SENATOR PETERS: Very good. Thank you.

15 SENATOR PAUL: And I want to second
 16 basically what Senator Peters has said. On
 17 records requests, I've told him, and I plan on
 18 it, it's going to be administration of my party,
 19 that if he wants records and there are legitimate
 20 records, we're going to sign requests together,
 21 and we'd like to get the records. It also helps,
 22 though, and I think Senator Lankford mentioned
 23 this, is you ask a question, not you, but to the
 24 administration or any administration, they're
 25 like, "Oh, yeah. We'll get back to you on it."

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1 Senator, to my background and my history. When I
 2 came to Congress, I worked with Republicans and
 3 Democrats on both sides of the aisle on many
 4 pieces of legislation and was very happy to do so
 5 and focus on priorities on where we could
 6 agree, knowing we may disagree on some
 7 issues, but there were areas where we could keep
 8 the federal government accountable and do due
 9 diligence by the people that pay their taxes and
 10 get up and go to work every single day. As
 11 governor, as well. I was governor for every
 12 single person in the state of South Dakota, and
 13 they were my number one priority, and everyone
 14 knew there that it didn't matter if you were
 15 Republican or Democrat, that my focus was on them
 16 and keeping our state thriving and free.

17 So, I look forward to continuing the
 18 work that I always have to be coming up with
 19 solutions and in a bipartisan manner, and
 20 hopefully, my visits to your office and
 21 conversations reflected that and my intention on
 22 how I would conduct the role as the Department of
 23 Homeland Security Secretary.

24 SENATOR PETERS: Got a brief follow up
 25 to that.

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1 Many times, I've even asked in advance, and I
 2 would suggest that we ask you in advance
 3 together, we ask in advance, "If you're coming in
 4 a month, we say we want this data. Be prepared
 5 to talk about it." And if you are, you'll have
 6 many more friends on both sides because what
 7 usually happens, and that's why I don't like
 8 springing the question. If it's a technical
 9 question that needs data, we're going to tell you
 10 in advance, at least I will, and we want you to
 11 come prepared with that.

12 And that goes a long way, because
 13 really what happens is we get stiff-armed. They
 14 say, "We'll get back to you," and we have no way
 15 to force you, really, other than we could cut the
 16 money off, and nobody ever does that. But you'll
 17 have 200,000 people working for you. By
 18 goodness, send your experts out, scour the
 19 records. And it is true, facts are difficult,
 20 and sometimes, there's different spins on the
 21 same set of facts, but I think that will help.

22 On the drones, I think we need more
 23 facts. So, I'm more than willing to work with
 24 the ranking member on doing something on drones,
 25 but I don't want every sheriff out there shooting

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34 (Pages 130 - 133)

1 up in the sky at stuff. We got to figure out and
 2 we got to get the truth about do we really have
 3 drones everywhere flying all the time? How many
 4 of them are planes? How many of them are drones?
 5 And let's go through this, and then let's figure
 6 out, and then let's talk about how we bring
 7 drones down. If we interrupt and collect a lot
 8 of cellular signal through that, are we doing it
 9 with a warrant? What are we going to do with all
 10 the Americans' data that we've collected to take
 11 down drones? If we have to take a whole cell
 12 towers worth of data, there's a lot of innocent
 13 people's data is going to be collected in that.
 14 Is that being gotten rid of? So, I think there
 15 are ways we can get to the right place.
 16 Everybody, obviously nobody wants drones coming
 17 down.

18 The only other thing I'd add on drones
 19 before I turn it over to Senator Lankford is
 20 look, I'm all for the NFL being protected and the
 21 Super Bowl being protected. They need to pay.
 22 They are a very rich organization. They want
 23 drones flying over in New Orleans. I'm all for
 24 it. The NFL ought to pay the government if the
 25 government's doing it, or we ought to have

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1 have felt like they've been sidelined, and
 2 they've not been able to do their job that they
 3 really signed up for. And what I'm hearing from
 4 you is you're going to allow them to do their job
 5 again, what has been historically true for a long
 6 time, that federal law enforcement is there to
 7 actually help protect the country and the
 8 citizens and those communities, that you're going
 9 to allow them to do that, and that's helpful.

10 So, I have two quick things that I want
 11 to be able to mention on this. One is right now,
 12 just in the structure of this, and we can talk
 13 about this a different time, but CBP facilities
 14 that are along the border are really run by a
 15 different entity called GSA, and they're not
 16 allowed to be able to do updates on their
 17 facilities or to design their facilities.

18 Somebody who lives 3,000 miles away and who
 19 doesn't actually do border patrol work, they
 20 actually design and oversee their facilities.
 21 That's a problem that we've got to be able to
 22 fix.

23 So, we've worked to be able to give
 24 more flexibility to CBP that when they have
 25 difficulty and challenges there, they have the

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1 private contractors doing it, but they shouldn't
 2 just get it for free. Senator Lankford.
 3 SENATOR LANKFORD: Thank you. Thanks,
 4 again. As Senator Paul will remember on this,
 5 there used to be a public facing website that all
 6 Americans could actually get the data, what's
 7 happening on the border, what's actually moving,
 8 and then when the numbers got bad, that seemed to
 9 disappear, and then we couldn't even get the data
 10 anymore. So, I look forward to actually finding
 11 ways to be able to have everybody has the ability
 12 to be able to see some of this data as well on
 13 it.

14 There's a reason that the DHS Secretary
 15 is the very first week of nominations. This is a
 16 really important role, and it is a non-partisan
 17 role. It is a national security role, and we're
 18 grateful that you've stepped into this, but it is
 19 important that we actually get you on the task to
 20 be able to make sure that it's out there.

21 You mentioned earlier in your testimony
 22 that we do have a morale problem at DHS right
 23 now, and I think a lot of that is because people
 24 that signed up to be federal law enforcement to
 25 be able to protect the United States of America

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1 ability to be able to make those changes. But
 2 I'm not going to ask you to make a commitment to
 3 this, because this is just one of those detail
 4 areas, but will you commit in the future to
 5 working with us, that this committee and you can
 6 work together to be able to figure out how the
 7 folks that are on the field can actually make
 8 decisions about the facilities they work in?

9 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yeah. Senator, I
 10 commit to working with you on that issue.

11 SENATOR LANKFORD: Terrific. And then
 12 I had a constituent in Oklahoma that is a hunter,
 13 like you are, like I am. He had a bag that he
 14 had some additional rounds that were in his bag
 15 that were left over from a hunting trip months
 16 before. He packed his bag, went on a vacation
 17 trip overseas, went through security with his
 18 bag. When he got overseas and then left and came
 19 back, they scanned his bag and said, "You have
 20 bullets, you have rounds in your bag," and he had
 21 I think five that were in his bag, that he didn't
 22 even remember were left over in an outside pocket
 23 from a hunting trip before.

24 Well, they promptly put him in jail and
 25 held him there and detained him there. Now, we

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35 (Pages 134 - 137)

1 worked through all the process to be able to get
 2 him back. My question is that same bag went
 3 through TSA security in my state before it went
 4 through security overseas. And so, one of the
 5 questions that I've asked is why were those
 6 rounds picked up there and not here?

7 Now, we don't have the full answer to
 8 that yet, but that's just one of those TSA
 9 questions that we need to have. Americans right
 10 now are on planes all over the country, and they
 11 count on a certain level of security when they go
 12 through that process. So, in the days ahead,
 13 will you work with me to be able to identify what
 14 are the challenges that we still face with the
 15 screening process and to be able to correct those
 16 for the security of all Americans?

17 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yes, Senator, I will
 18 work with you on that.

19 SENATOR LANKFORD: Thank you.

20 GOVERNOR NOEM: I was surprised TSA
 21 didn't come up more today, but that is an area in
 22 need of reform as well, and I look forward to
 23 working with you there.

24 SENATOR LANKFORD: Look forward to
 25 that. Thank you. I yield back.

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1 border security, generally. We know we need to
 2 provide some kind of path to earn citizenship for
 3 a lot of the undocumented people in this country,
 4 and we know it's possible, because we did it in
 5 2013.

6 The United States Senate, as you will
 7 recall, passed a comprehensive immigration reform
 8 measure. Overwhelmingly, it was bipartisan. I
 9 was proud to be a part of it, going through the
 10 Judiciary Committee, but obviously it will
 11 involve Homeland Security, and I hope that we can
 12 continue, as Senator Lankford was a part of the
 13 effort in the last session to expand on those
 14 efforts and move forward on a bipartisan basis
 15 toward bipartisan comprehensive immigration
 16 reform.

17 I want to talk to you a little bit
 18 about domestic terrorism, which we discussed
 19 during my previous round, and I know you've
 20 discussed it afterward, including not just
 21 migrant crime and radicalization by ISIS, which
 22 are real and present problems, I also want to ask
 23 you about domestic terrorism events unrelated to
 24 groups outside our borders. We've seen a rise in
 25 antisemitism in this country. It has spiked

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1 SENATOR PAUL: Government needs a
 2 healthy dose of common sense. Bullets in your
 3 bag. I had a guy with bullets in the back of his
 4 pickup truck coming back from Mexico. We
 5 arrested him and took his truck, and only because
 6 the Institute of Justice fought for him for three
 7 years that he got his truck back. That's crazy,
 8 the things we do. Let's have some common sense,
 9 and hopefully, someone overseeing it will allow
 10 that. Senator Blumenthal, you're going to finish
 11 us up.

12 SENATOR BLUMENTHAL: Thank you,
 13 Chairman Paul. I'm the last of your questioners,
 14 so that means I get unlimited amounts of time.

15 GOVERNOR NOEM: Okay.

16 SENATOR BLUMENTHAL: Not really. Not
 17 even close. I want to sort of continue the
 18 emphasis on bipartisanship and most especially on
 19 immigration reform. What this nation needs is
 20 comprehensive immigration reform. We know about
 21 the need for more H-1B visas and other kinds of
 22 extensions of the visa program that enable the
 23 United States to have more workers that are
 24 desperately needed in certain areas of our
 25 country. We know that there has to be better

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1 beyond any prediction, and I want to know of your
 2 concern with antisemites, racist events,
 3 Charlottesville, Buffalo, Pittsburgh, there's a
 4 shorthand for these violent terrorist acts
 5 against people in the United States.

6 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yes, Senator, I'm very
 7 concerned about what we've seen in this country
 8 as far as antisemitic violence that has happened.
 9 In fact, last year during our legislative
 10 session, I brought legislation to more clearly
 11 define it so that we could fight it in our home
 12 state. And I'm hopeful I can work with you to
 13 continue to do what we can to make sure that we
 14 are addressing this rising threat and not
 15 facilitating it in this country.

16 SENATOR BLUMENTHAL: And I just want to
 17 make sure that when you say we're protecting
 18 Americans against terrorism, that we're
 19 protecting all Americans, including people in
 20 mosques, in churches, in synagogues, people
 21 regardless of their worship, their race, their
 22 background. We need to protect all Americans
 23 from antisemitism, racism, Islamophobia. I hope
 24 you'll commit to that effort.

25 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yes, correct. Thank

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<p>1 you, Senator, and I look forward to working with 2 you to do that.</p> <p>3 SENATOR BLUMENTHAL: In my closing 4 minute-and-a-half, I just want to call your 5 attention to an effort that I've led to help 6 reunite children with their parents, children who 7 were separated as a result of the so-called 8 family separation policy. In the last 9 administration, I have introduced a measure 10 called Keep Families Together, not only to limit 11 separation of families at or near ports of entry, 12 but also the Families Belong Together Act for 13 several Congresses to help bring the children, 14 the kids who were victims of this policy and who 15 still are not back with their parents. I hope 16 that you will support that kind of effort.</p> <p>17 GOVERNOR NOEM: Senator, the Trump 18 administration never had a family separation 19 policy. They had a zero-tolerance policy, which 20 said that our laws would be followed. What I'm 21 alarmed by is the over 300,000 children that went 22 missing during the Biden administration. And 23 when we talk about children and what they're 24 potentially facing as far as victimization in 25 this country and the trafficking that's going on,</p>	<p>1 to keep families together. We will uphold our 2 law, and we'll make sure that we're doing 3 everything we can to keep our children safe from 4 the trafficking and the drug epidemic that's hit 5 this country.</p> <p>6 SENATOR BLUMENTHAL: I'm going to end 7 on an optimistic note and say I take that as a 8 yes.</p> <p>9 GOVERNOR NOEM: Yeah.</p> <p>10 SENATOR BLUMENTHAL: Thank you, Mr. 11 Chairman.</p> <p>12 SENATOR PAUL: Thank you for your 13 testimony. The nominee has filed responses to 14 biographical and financial questionnaires, 15 answered prehearing questions submitted by the 16 committee, and had their financial statements 17 reviewed by the Office of Government Ethics. 18 Without objection, this information will be part 19 of the hearing record with the exception of the 20 financial data, which are on file and available 21 for public inspection in the committee offices. 22 The hearing will remain open until 5:00 p.m. 23 today, Friday, January 17th for the submission of 24 statements and questions.</p> <p>25 For the record, this hearing is</p>
<p>Page 142</p> <p>1 this administration's lack of desire to find out 2 where those children are or what they may be 3 going through is alarming to me. So, I want to 4 stop that.</p> <p>5 SENATOR BLUMENTHAL: Well, because my 6 time is expiring, I'm just going to interrupt 7 again with apologies to say let's put aside ...</p> <p>8 GOVERNOR NOEM: Well, I can't put aside 9 340,000 children.</p> <p>10 SENATOR BLUMENTHAL: Let's put aside 11 the labels, let's put aside what happened in the 12 past. There are still a thousand children who 13 are separated and waiting to be reunited. I'd 14 like your commitment that you're going to 15 continue the effort to reunite them with their 16 parents.</p> <p>17 GOVERNOR NOEM: Senator, keeping 18 families together is critically important to me 19 and to this country. I'm concerned about Laken 20 Riley's family, that they no longer have her. 21 I'm concerned about the fact that we have people 22 in this country that don't know where their 23 children are or people in other countries who 24 sent their children here and they've been lost by 25 this administration. So, yes, my focus will be</p>	<p>Page 144</p> <p>1 adjourned.</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p> <p>5</p> <p>6</p> <p>7</p> <p>8</p> <p>9</p> <p>10</p> <p>11</p> <p>12</p> <p>13</p> <p>14</p> <p>15</p> <p>16</p> <p>17</p> <p>18</p> <p>19</p> <p>20</p> <p>21</p> <p>22</p> <p>23</p> <p>24</p> <p>25</p>

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1 C E R T I F I C A T I O N
2 I, Sonya Ledanski Hyde, certify that the
3 foregoing transcript is a true and accurate
4 record of the proceedings.

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